

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 28 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Downtown Providence Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

*Roughly bounded by*Washington, Westminster, Empire and Weybosset
street & number Streets, various cross streets not for publicationcity, town Providence N.A. vicinity of Congressional District #2
Hon. Claudine Schneider

state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | N.A. in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Various multiple--see list on file at Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Providence City Hall

street & number 25 Dorrance Street

city, town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Downtown Providence Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☐ nodate 1980 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street

city, town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☒ good
☒ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☒ moved

date Doyle Monument, 1969

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Providence's central business district, unlike those of other major American cities, is an easily definable entity physically separated from adjacent industrial and residential neighborhoods by distinct natural and man-made boundaries (see locator map). It is bounded on the east by the Providence River, on the south by Interstate Highway 195, on the west by Interstate Highway 95, and on the north by railroad tracks and the Rhode Island State House. Within these broad perimeters, the Providence Downtown Historic District includes a central core of commercial structures along the major thoroughfares which traverse this area (for specific boundaries see section 10 and boundary map).

The Downtown Providence Historic District sits in a shallow topographical bowl south of the confluence of the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers. The land rises gently to the southwest, and steeper hills rise to the north and east across the two rivers. This topographical configuration is a result of leveling hills and filling bodies of water that once occupied much of the northeast section of the area.

Streets in the Downtown Historic District form a basic grid system whose major axes run northeast-southwest and northwest-southeast. The major deviation from this grid is Weybosset Street, which curves along its course and intersects Westminster Street at its northeast end: the only aboriginal thoroughfare in the District, it follows the course of the Pequot Indian Trail, and its serpentine course originally skirted the southern edge of Weybosset Hill which rose at its northeast end.

The Providence Downtown Historic District is a densely built area dominated by commercial and institutional structures. While these structures span the years between 1810 and the present and include representations of major architectural trends since the early nineteenth century, the greatest part of the architectural fabric is composed of buildings erected between 1870 and 1930. These structures, despite stylistic variety of that period, share common architectural qualities, such as scale, massing, and material that give the Downtown Historic District its unity and continuity. With the exception of the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment project of the 1960s (west of Empire Street), early and late buildings of different styles are dispersed throughout the district, creating a balanced mixture of old and new buildings against the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century background.

As a functioning business center, the Providence Downtown Historic District is best understood as three separate but interrelating areas. Each area is characterized not only by a predominant land use or activity but also by a concentration of building forms most suitable to that activity. These areas are not sharply delineated, and visual continuity exists among them.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ___ prehistoric | ___ archeology-prehistoric | ___ community planning | <u>X</u> landscape architecture | <u>X</u> religion |
| ___ 1400–1499 | ___ archeology-historic | ___ conservation | ___ law | ___ science |
| ___ 1500–1599 | ___ agriculture | ___ economics | ___ literature | <u>X</u> sculpture |
| ___ 1600–1699 | <u>X</u> architecture | ___ education | ___ military | ___ social/ |
| ___ 1700–1799 | ___ art | ___ engineering | ___ music | humanitarian |
| <u>X</u> 1800–1899 | <u>X</u> commerce | ___ exploration/settlement | ___ philosophy | <u>X</u> theater |
| <u>X</u> 1900– | ___ communications | ___ industry | <u>X</u> politics/government | <u>X</u> transportation |
| | | ___ invention | | <u>X</u> other (specify) |
| | | | | Community |
| Specific dates | See Inventory | Builder/Architect | See Inventory | Development |

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Downtown Providence Historic District is a highly cohesive urban environment which evinces its growth from an agricultural adjunct to the east side of the city (the site of its original settlement) into the vital core of the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island. The district's homogeneity is richly complex, for many forces have shaped it. The district's buildings chronicle the history of architecture from Federal buildings of the early nineteenth century through the vast array of commercial types and styles of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the financial and commercial center of the state since about 1800, Downtown is of major importance to the history of commerce. The area's parks and open spaces, created and designed around the turn of the century, are significant to the history of landscape architecture. Since the mid-years of the nineteenth century, Downtown has been a major governmental center, both for the city and federal offices. The six remaining churches Downtown make the area significant to the history of religion. Sculpture--both as public, civic monuments and as architectural ornament--are important components of Downtown's built environment. Downtown has long been the state's theatrical center, as seen in the three remaining structures. Downtown Providence is historically the junction of major transportation routes: waterways, railroad, highways to the hinterland, and urban and inter-urban mass transportation lines. Moreover, the growth of the area and its building patterns reflect mainstream attitudes toward the civic, commercial, and cultural development that characterizes the birth and evolution of a central business district as a nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban phenomenon.

Providence was settled on the east side of the Providence River by Roger Williams and his followers in 1636. These refugees from the monolithic Puritan society in the Massachusetts Bay Colony established a settlement based on religious freedom and separation of church and state. Unlike other New England settlers, the founders of Providence (who built no church until 1700) had no use for a square of common ground dominated by a meeting house, and the town grew in linear fashion along a major axis, Main Street, which parallels the Providence River on its east.

The area west of the Providence River, known as Weybosset Neck, remained unsettled for a century after colonization. The land was unappealing, dominated at its eastern end by the steep Weybosset Hill, which was surrounded by marshy lowlands and traversed by Muddy Dock Creek, which followed the course of present-day Dorrance Street. To the north, the Great Salt Cove (filled at the end of the nineteenth century) separated the Weybosset Neck from the broad plains and rolling hills between the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Downtown Providence," Statewide Historical Preservation Report,
P-P-5, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, May, 1981.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property c. 90 acres

Quadrangle name Providence

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the Downtown Providence Historic District is shown
as the dotted line on the accompanying map, "Downtown Providence Historic
(See Continuation Sheet #81)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| N.A. | | | |

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William McKenzie Woodward, Principal Historic Preservation Planner

organization R.I. Historical Preservation Comm. date 15 November 1983

street & number 150 Benefit Street

telephone 401-277-2678

city or town Providence

state Rhode Island 02903

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

William McKenzie Woodward

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 16 Dec 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

William McKenzie Woodward
Keeper of the National Register

date 2/10/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The easternmost area is the financial district, bounded on the north by Kennedy Plaza, on the west by Dorrance Street and on the south by Weybosset Street; traditionally the locus of financial institutions, the area still contains the greatest concentration of banks, brokerages, insurance companies, and professional offices. To accommodate these many businesses, the largest buildings in the downtown have been built in this area, ranging from Providence's first high-rise steel-frame building the 1896 Banigan Building, to the most recent structure, the Fleet Center complex, begun in 1983. A portion of this area, the Custom House Historic District, is already entered on the National Register.

Directly adjacent on the north of the financial district is the government and transportation center which, because of its large open space, serves further as a visual foil for the tall buildings of the financial district. Providence City Hall, the Federal Buildings, the Biltmore Hotel, and Union Station dominate the perimeters of Kennedy Plaza and City Hall Park, the largest open space in downtown Providence and an important terminal for intra-city mass transit. The buildings around Kennedy Plaza built at regular intervals since 1870, form a visually exciting frame for this large open space, which is itself a major monument of downtown civic planning.

The area southwest of Dorrance Street and north of Pine Street is predominantly commercial. Originally an early and mid-nineteenth-century middle- and upper-class residential neighborhood, it was gradually transformed by the construction of stores and combination retail-and-office buildings after the Civil War. So complete was the transformation, that today only a handful of residential structures remain; all are now converted to commercial use. The commercial structures erected in this area are generally low-rise (three- to six-story) buildings, and the variety of stylistic treatments enlivens the streetscape without disjunction.

Two major types of intrusions detract from the integrity of the district. New construction that is insensitive to its surroundings (including several recent parking decks, garages and minor commercial buildings) has been placed along major thoroughfares with little thought of its visual impact upon the existing built environment. More common and more easily changed are the numerous poorly designed storefronts that mar the first and second stories of many commercial buildings. These alterations are much more frequent in the retail section of the district than elsewhere. Growing interest in the redevelopment of the downtown area has spurred a concern for more sympathetic rehabilitation of existing structures, however, and several recent projects have restored original storefronts or created harmonious new ones. This trend, if it continues, will noticeably improve the integrity of the district.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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Inventory

Contributing elements within the Downtown Providence Historic District are defined as those sites, buildings, structures, and objects that relate visually and historically to the district's areas of significance during the period Downtown substantially achieved its present form, between 1800 and 1940. Non-contributing elements are those which have either lost their integrity or post-date the period of significance. The one exception to these criteria is People's Bank (1949), 70 Kennedy Plaza, a handsome and unique example of the Style Moderne functionally related to its surroundings.

Those properties already entered on the National Register, either individually or as part of a district, are designated by an asterisk in the margin.

CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

ABBOTT PARK PLACE

Abbott Park (1746, 1873, 1927): A small, well planted park with a large, elaborate, cast-iron fountain at its center. Given to Providence as a square for the adjacent Beneficent Congregational Church by Daniel Abbott, Abbott Park is the oldest park in Providence and has remained in constant use since its donation. Once a simple grassy knoll extending east from Beneficent Congregational Church, the park was embellished with the fountain and a cast-iron fence (now removed) in 1873; the street on the park's west side was cut in 1927. The park was re-landscaped in the 1970s. It is the most visible reminder of the early settlement of what is now Downtown Providence.

- 8 Plantations Club, Johnson and Wales College (1926-27): Andrews, Jones, Briscoe & Whitmore, architects; Georgian Revival; 4½-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with mansard roof; interiors are now somewhat altered, but the original lounge retains mid-18th-century paneling salvaged from a house on nearby Pine Street. The Plantations Club was established in 1916 and met at 77 Franklin Street until this structure was erected. Following the demise of this popular women's club in the 1960s, the building was purchased by Johnson and Wales College, which has centered its activities in this part of Downtown Providence. Overlooking Abbott Park, the Plantations Club handsomely complements both Beneficent Congregational Church and the park itself.

ABORN STREET

18-20 Koerner's Lunch (ca. 1928): 1-story brick structure with original

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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Aborn Street (cont.)

storefront and interior. This small structure is related to the other 1- and 2-story buildings constructed in the vicinity of Empire Street beginning around 1915. It exemplifies a once prevalent type of restaurant, the lunchroom--the urban business-district counter-part of the diner. Koerner's Lunch contributes a bit of earthy variety to Downtown.

CHESTNUT STREET

Doyle Monument (1889, 1969): Henry H. Kitson, sculptor. This life-size bronze statue of Mayor Thomas A. Doyle was dedicated 3 June 1889 in Cathedral Square, where it defined the western end of Weybosset Street at its intersection with Westminster Street. The statue faced east, overlooking the city Doyle had served as mayor for eighteen years before his death in office in 1886. His tenure marked considerable consolidation for the city, with the organization of city governmental departments, the construction of City Hall, and the realignment of the numerous randomly placed streets created by the unplanned growth of the city in the 19th century. Mayor Doyle's statue was removed from this intersection in front of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul during the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project and placed here at the corner of Chestnut and Broad Streets.

- 30-32 Waite-Thresher Company Building (1911): 5-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th-century storefronts and pier-and-spandrel wall articulation on upper stories with paired double-hung sash windows under segmental arches. Built for a jewelry manufacturing firm formerly located on Peck Street, the Waite-Thresher Building is part of the commercial and light-industrial development in the area south of Pine Street during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Still used for various light industries related to jewelry manufacturing, it is similar in size and scale to the adjacent Plantations Club at 8 Abbott Park Place.

CLEMENCE STREET

- 5 Shepard's Warehouse (ca. 1900): An altered 3-story brick building with a mid-20th-century storefront and evenly spaced sash windows with segmental-arch lintels on part of first and all of second story. Used by the nearby Shepard Company as adjunct storage, this is one of what were once many minor, side-street buildings for such purposes. Its alterations for conversion into retail and bar space are minor but unsympathetic.

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CUSTOM HOUSE STREET

- *32 J.G. Eddy & Co. Building (1875, 1926, 1982): High Victorian Gothic with fine Georgian Revival shopfront; 5-story masonry building with evenly spaced windows with polychrome-radiating voussoirs and polychrome banding of brick on the upper stories; the 1926 storefront is stone and bronze with large, rope-molding-surrounded, multipane windows. Built to house the wholesale grocery firm of J.G. Eddy & Co., which remained here until the late 1880s, it was headquarters of Rhode Island Electric Protective Company from the early 1890s to the mid-1920s. In 1925, the local investment firm Bodel & Co. bought the building and remodeled the first and second floors for its offices; Bodell remained here until 1943. The building was rehabilitated in 1982 as the Providence office of the investment firm Drexel Burnham Lambert.

DORRANCE STREET

Named for Judge Dorrance, an early president of the Town Council, Dorrance Street follows the course of Muddy Dock Creek, which flowed south into the Providence River. The creek was bridged at the intersection of Weybosset Street in 1740, and by 1771 marked the western boundary of the paved streets in Providence. In 1827 the creekbed was finally filled, and Dorrance Street was extended north to Exchange Place in 1855, pursuant to a highway act passed by the General Assembly in 1854 to lay out, enlarge, and straighten the streets of Providence. The cobblestone paving was replaced by granite blocks on a concrete foundation in 1886.

- *11 Biltmore Hotel (1920-22, 1979): Warren & Wetmore, architects; Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott, architects for rehabilitation. Neo-Federal; 19-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with first three stories filling the trapezoidal lot and surmounted by 16-story L-shape tower; glass-sheathed exterior elevator at inside corner of L; 2-story round-head windows on uppermost stories define ballroom and dining room; interior altered during rehabilitation, but retains the elaborate Adamesque motifs in the lobby, former dining rooms, and ballroom. Built through the efforts of the Providence Chamber of Commerce, which initiated the Biltmore project and raised funds for the construction of this civic-cultural rallying point, the hotel was an important gathering place for Rhode Islanders until it closed in 1975. Its rehabilitation and reopening in 1979 have been an important step in the late 1970s revitalization of Downtown Providence. The Biltmore's genesis, decline, and rebirth recall the vicissitudes of Downtown Providence's commercial history. It is further distinguished by

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Dorrance Street (cont.)

its important role in Providence social history. The building is also a landmark facing the largest open space in Downtown, Kennedy Plaza, and Burnside Park.

- *25 City Hall (1874-78): Samuel F.J. Thayer, architect. Second Empire; 5-story, cast-iron-and-masonry structure faced with granite; mansard roof; free-standing building nine bays wide and thirteen bays deep, rising three-and-a-half stories above full rusticated basement; splayed perron (with lamp standards mounted at each side) leading to central entrance pavilion which culminates in convex mansard "dome"; highly plastic wall treatment includes balustrades, pilasters, engaged columns, stringcourses, aedicular entrances and a roundel with a bust of Roger Williams above the second story; elaborate interior includes 5-story, central staircourt and elaborate chambers for the Mayor, City Council, and Aldermen. The Town House at Benefit and College Streets was the first municipal building in Providence. The brick Market House in Market Square was used by the Town and City of Providence for municipal offices before the construction of the present City Hall. The City Hall lot, as the site was designated upon its acquisition in 1857, was the site of the City Hall Theatre and Harrington's Opera House between 1865-74. The building is based on the 1860s Boston City Hall, one of the early civic buildings in the Second Empire style, which predominated as a government style in the late 1860s and 1870s. Unlike Boston City Hall, it is almost entirely unaltered and still in original use. Providence City Hall, like the Federal Building at the opposite end of the Kennedy Plaza Mall, is a key architectural anchor of this open urban space. Threatened with demolition by the 1959 Downtown Master Plan, City Hall is now undergoing restoration and provides a handsome monument to civic self-esteem from an earlier, more optimistic age and reflects the city's renewing sense of pride.
- *62 Union Trust Building (1901, 1920, 1928, 1964, 1982): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects. Beaux-Arts; 12-story, steel-frame structure sheathed in brick and stone; original rusticated-stone arcaded wall treatment on lower two stories with Corinthian-column entrance portico below two figures carved by Daniel Chester French, rusticated stone-and-brick wall with evenly spaced sash windows on third story, regularly spaced windows with stone surrounds on upper stories, elaborate heavy bracketed modillion-and-dentil stone cornice, original marble-and-plaster Beaux-Arts

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Dorrance Street (cont.)

interiors with stained-glass windows of pecuniary themes on the ground floor. The Bank of America, chartered in 1851, was re-organized in 1894 as the Union Trust Company. The expanding company -- it absorbed nine other banks in its history -- demolished the Curry and Richards Building (1868; Clifton A. Hall, architect) in 1900 to make room for its grand new offices. Additions and renovations were made in 1920, 1928, and (following its absorption by Industrial National Bank in 1954) 1964. The finest Beaux-Arts office building in Providence, the Union Trust Building was featured in the 8 November 1902 issue of American Architect and Building News, one of the leading national architectural journals of the period. The Union Trust Building, a well known, major landmark, was rehabilitated and reopened in 1982 as headquarters for the Greater Providence Trust Co.

- 71-79 Commercial Block (ca. 1860): Italianate, 4-story, brick-and-masonry structure with an L-shape plan; 20th-century storefronts, regularly spaced fenestration on Dorrance, Weybosset and Eddy Street elevations; modern interiors. Documentation suggests that this structure housed mixed uses in the 19th century: by the 1870s it included five jewelry manufacturing operations and Arming-ton's Dry Goods Store. By the early 20th century, it had been taken over by commercial interests entirely. While renovated on the interior, the building's exterior has suffered relatively little modernization. Still a handsome mid-19th-century structure, it recalls the evolution of the commercially oriented central business district.
- 76 Case-Mead Building (1859, 1906): 5-story, stucco-sheathed wood-frame building with mid-20th-century storefronts; heavy string-courses above second and fourth stories with pier-and-spandrel wall system on third and fourth stories and paired windows on fifth story; bracketed box cornice. The original 4-story, frame Case-Mead Building was erected on this site in 1859. It housed an infantry hall in its high fourth story before the Infantry Hall was completed on South Main Street in 1880. During the late 19th century the infamous Turkish Parlor -- an ill-reputed gathering place where, it was rumored, brazen women smoked -- was located on the second floor. In 1906 the building was thoroughly remodeled: a fifth floor was created out of the upper half of the fourth story and the present wall articulation system was applied. The awkwardness of adapting the earlier fenestration to the remodeled articulation system gives the building much of its charm and vitality.

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Dorrance Street (cont.)

Its interesting architectural quality and its role -- albeit somewhat tawdry -- in Providence social history make it a noteworthy though still undervalued landmark at a major Downtown intersection.

88 Teste Block (1850-60, 1879): Italianate, 4-story brick building with 12-bay storefront and a broad cornice above first story; 6-bay facade on upper stories defined by narrow paired sash windows with polychrome segmental arches over each pair, stone string-courses between each story; broad frieze and wide eaves. Begun in 1859, the Teste Block was occupied the following year and expanded in 1879. For many years, a drug firm occupied the storefront, which today is a men's clothing store. The upper stories have always housed small offices. An extremely handsome and well preserved mid-19th-century building, the Teste Block is the visual highlight of the intersection of Dorrance and Weybosset Streets.

90-96 Dorrance Building (ca. 1920): 2-story brick structure with central entrance on first story flanked by two storefronts with plateglass windows and clustered sash windows on second; simple band cornice. The Dorrance Building exemplifies the small vernacular commercial building predominant in the 1920s and 1930s.

123-131 Masonic Temple (1897, 1980): Fred E. Field, architect. 5-story masonry structure with irregular plan (to fit lot); walls fully articulated only on Dorrance and Pine Street elevations; unaltered 1st-story, cast-iron storefronts with engaged Tuscan columns separating plate-glass windows; upper stories organized around colossal Corinthian pilasters on piers; corbeled bracketed cornice; interior renovated for office space in 1980. Built to replace the original Masonic Temple (1884-86); William R. Walker, architect) on this site and demolished by fire in 1896, this building was abandoned in the 1960s for a suburban location. Increased demand for office space Downtown and the relocation of the State Court complex to a nearby site made this an attractive building for rehabilitation as office space. One of the outstanding late 19th-century buildings in Providence, the Masonic Temple makes a fine gateway to the southern entrance of the central business district.

*128-134 "Shakspeare Hall," later Ballou, Johnson and Nichols (1838-44, ca. 1855): James Bucklin, architect (1838). 6-story masonry structure with stuccoed walls punctuated by regularly spaced sash windows, facade defined by 3½-story Doric pilasters now without

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Dorrance Street (cont.)

entablature; open interiors. Built as a 3½-story, temple-front theatre in the Greek Revival style, "Shakspeare Hall" opened in October of 1838. Its novelty soon wore off however, and its closing in 1844 was further precipitated by objections from the nearby Second Baptist Church. The same year, the building was converted to a planetarium where Dr. Dionysus Lardner conducted lectures on astronomy until a fire left only the exterior walls standing in October of 1844. It was rebuilt and later used as a warehouse by the A. & W. Sprague Manufacturing Company and later by B.B. & R. Knight. It was used as office and warehouse by Ballou, Johnson and Nichols, hard-goods wholesalers, from 1903 to 1977. Current plans call for its rehabilitation as office space. The "Shakspeare Hall" Building, the earliest extant theatre building in Providence, chronicles the growth of Downtown and the diversification and specialization of land use.

DYER STREET

- *101 Owen Building (1866, 1877): Stone & Carpenter, architects (1877). Second Empire; 4½-story granite-and-metal-trimmed-brick building with slate mansard roof; trapezoidal plan (to fit site); slightly altered first story retains granite piers and display windows; cast-iron cornice above first story, regularly spaced polychrome-voussoir sash windows on upper stories with paired round-head windows over Pine Street entrance; richly articulated sheet-metal cornice and dormers. Built by George and Smith Owen in 1866, it was remodeled in 1877 for use by Owen Brothers, manufacturers of worsted yarn. One of the city's most handsome late 19th-century buildings, it has been used for warehouse space, retail enterprises, office space, and most recently as a restaurant. Located at the edge of Downtown and overlooking the Providence River, the Owen Building and the adjacent Hay Block make a handsome edge and recall the more active days of the Port of Providence, when packet boats and ships docked at wharves in front of the building.
- *117-135 Hay Building (1867): James Bucklin, architect. Second Empire, 3½-story, granite-trimmed brick structure, trapezoidal in plan, with cast-iron storefronts and the date "1867" worked in red slate on the short, southeast face of the mansard roof; original storefronts little altered, regularly spaced sash windows (replaced in 1979) with granite lintels on upper stories; quoined corners; dentil cornice; board-and-batten dormers. The Hay Block, originally a warehouse adjacent to the Port of Providence, has long

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Dyer Street (cont.)

housed small retail and commercial enterprises. It underwent rehabilitation as condominium office space in 1979-80. Built by Alexander Duncan, a Scot related to and allied in business with Arcade developer Cyrus Butler, the Hay Block is a typical mid-19th-century warehouse. Only the Hay and Owen Blocks and Duncan's warehouse at 146 Dyer Street remain of these 19th-century waterfront structures, many of which were owned by Duncan and his heirs.

EDDY STREET

Eddy Street takes its name from Eddy's Point, a small island in the Providence River connected to the mainland by a man-made embankment near the present-day intersection of Eddy and Dyer Streets. The island was settled by brothers Joseph and Barnard Eddy in the eighteenth century, and the area around it developed into an active commercial area as shipyards were established on the west side of the Providence River. By 1807, the street extended from Westminster Street to the river, and in 1867 it was extended north from Westminster Street to Fountain Street.

- 51-55 Aldrich Estate Building (1908): 6-story, brick-sheathed building with original cast-iron storefront and elaborately articulated upper stories with paired sash windows, triple-sash windows, and projecting metal prismatic and rectangular bay windows; corbel cornice; elaborate iron fire escape with twin helical stairs between second and sixth stories. Built by the estate of Anson N. Aldrich, this commercial block replaced the Girard Hotel (ca. 1890). Similar in scale to adjacent buildings, the Aldrich Building is distinguished by its highly plastic facade treatment.
- 57-59 Smith Building (1912): Martin & Hall, architects. 8-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th century storefronts and pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories with Chicago windows and quoined corners; bracketed box cornice with wide eaves. The Smith Building, erected by Edwin A. Smith, a real-estate developer, exemplifies the handsome commercial building type that rose during the prosperous years of the early 20th century.
- 95-97 Burgess Heirs Building (1887): 4-story, brick-sheathed building with mid-20th-century storefront, bay window on second story, three evenly spaced sash windows on third story, three paired sash windows on fourth story. The heirs of Thomas Burgess built this as an investment property.

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EMPIRE STREET

By the turn of the century, Providence had grown tremendously with little comprehensive planning given to traffic and circulation. To improve the transportation network, the city retained Bion J. Arnold, a consulting engineer from Chicago, to investigate public transportation and to recommend improvements in the system. His 1911 report called for the creation of new or enlarged streets to accommodate street railways and made particular note of the cramped condition of Downtown arteries. Empire Street was one of the major Downtown improvements based on this report and replaced Walker Street, a narrow road which ran from Fountain to Westminster Street. In 1915, the street was widened to eighty feet and extended south to Weybosset Street opposite its intersection with Chestnut Street. One of the buildings condemned for this expansion was the Empire Theater, located at the previous southern terminus of the street, which had been renamed after the theatre in 1901.

- 75 Lyman Building (ca. 1926): 2-story, pre-cast-stone and brick structure with glass and aluminum storefronts, stylized striated corner pilasters, and regularly spaced sash windows on the second story. Erected on the site of Lyman Hall, a small auditorium, this modest commercial building has housed small shops and offices throughout its history. Like most other buildings on Empire Street (widened and opened from Washington to Weybosset Street in 1915), the Lyman Building is a small, simple commercial structure from the 1920s.
- 87 Old Stone Bank, Empire Street Branch (1929): Howe & Church, assisted by Jackson, Robertson & Adams, architects. Classical Revival, 3-story, granite-and-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a fully articulated, stylized triumphal-arch-motif facade; mullioned windows with fan lights fill the arches; and the main entrance is in the lower portion of the central arch. The banking hall has been heavily altered. Built as a branch of the Old Stone Bank, the successor firm of the Providence Institution for Savings (founded 1819), this building is the visual highlight in a block of simpler early 20th-century commercial blocks.
- 95-121 Commercial Block (1927): 3-story, brick-sheathed building with original storefronts of wood-framed display windows, large plate-glass windows with transom lights on the second story, and sash windows on the third story; bracketed cornice with parapet. Constructed in the decade following the widening of Empire Street in 1915, this retail and office building recalls the prosperity of

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Empire Street (cont.)

that period. The formerly residential neighborhood was upset by the gradual westward push of the central business district which reached this area in the second and third decades of the 20th-century and low-rise vernacular commercial structures like this one filled the area.

- 150 Providence Public Library (1900, 1952-54): Stone, Carpenter & Wilson, architects; Howe, Prout & Ekman, architects for 1954 addition. Original building: American Renaissance, 2-story, granite-and-brick structure with a copper, low hip roof, an elaborate 13-bay facade facing Washington Street and set back from street behind a balustrade and a 3-bay entrance porch at center of facade on the first story; bracketed boxed cornice with decorative frieze; most original interior spaces retain fine detailing. 1954 addition: Moderne, 3-story, granite-and-marble-veneer, steel-frame structure with undecorated wall surface and tall, narrow, regularly spaced windows on first story and square windows above. Established in 1875, the Providence Public Library successively occupied parts of three other Downtown buildings before moving into the 1900 structure. A 25-year drive for additional facilities was culminated by the completion of the 1954 structure. Stone, Carpenter & Willson, Providence's leading turn-of-the-century architectural firm, won the design competition for the Public Library with this elaborate Renaissance-derived structure, which owes a considerable debt to McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library of 1892; the exterior owes much to Sansovino's library on St. Mark's Square in Venice, erected in 1554. Plans and drawings of the building were published in the prestigious "American Architect and Building News". The 1954 addition, however, ignores the scale and texture of the original building and attempts, by siting, to hide the earlier structure.

EXCHANGE TERRACE

City Hall Park (1892, 1898, 1906, 1911, 1952): Landscaped park bounded by Exchange Terrace to the north and east, Washington Street and Kennedy Plaza to the south, and Dorrance Street to the west, and divided by Francis Street. This open space is subdivided by rambling paths through each of the two sections. Statuary includes the equestrian portrait of General Ambrose E. Burnside (1887; Launt Thompson, sculptor) and the complex figural composition of the Bajnotti Fountain (1902; Enid Yandell, sculptor) in the eastern section and the Scout Monument (1911; Henry Schonthardt, sculptor) dedicated to Major Henry H. Young in the western

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Exchange Terrace (cont.)

section; a wooden Roll of Honor for World War II in the southeast corner of the eastern section is being superceded by a more permanent memorial at the Civic Center. Located on an artificial knoll created as an approach to the Union Station located at grade, City Hall Park was dedicated in 1892 and landscaped following the completion of the station in 1898. Monumental sculpture was added in the first decade of the 20th century, including the resetting of the Burnside Monument from Exchange Place in 1906. The monuments in the park are randomly placed, serving no discernable visual purpose, and at odds with the landscaping of the park. Laid out in a more picturesque manner than Exchange Place Mall to the south, City Hall Park contrasts with that busier area and sets off Union Station. Conceived in the late 19th-century "City Beautiful" spirit, it is less successful as a pedestrian transportation link than as a retreat.

- 3 Federal Building Annex, now John O. Pastore Building (1938-40): Jackson, Robertson & Adams, architects; Neo-Federal, 3-story, brick-and-stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with truncated hip roof; 5-bay, 2-story stone frontispiece (embellished with Art Deco reliefs illustrating mail distribution) defined by stylized Tuscan pilasters supporting dentil cornice and flanked by 2-story projecting gable-end pavilions; simple, original, stone-sheathed lobby. Built to relieve overcrowding in the adjacent Federal Building (1908), this annex replaced the city's Fire Department Headquarters (1903). It served as the main post office for Providence until the automated facility in the West River Industrial Park was completed in 1960. It was named after the former governor and U.S. Senator in 1978. The Pastore Building is a typical and good example of structures erected by the Federal Government under Works Progress Administration in the Depression.
- *4 Union Station (1896-98): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects. American Renaissance complex of four structures (the fifth, easternmost burned in 1941, but its basement remains) includes the large, central passenger station flanked by 2-story, square-plan buildings with a 4-story structure at the western end; all are brick-sheathed, steel-frame structures with dentil cornices and hip roofs. The passenger station has a projecting central pavilion designed as a triumphal-arch "gateway" entrance; its 2-story exterior articulation belies the interior spatial organization, with a large rectangular waiting room occupying most of this block. The flanking

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Exchange Terrace (cont.)

buildings have been altered on their interiors, but the building immediately west of the passenger station, originally a restaurant, retains its original fireplace with an elaborate wooden mantel. Built to replace the first Union Station (1848; Thomas A. Telft, architect) which stood 500 feet south in the middle of today's Kennedy Plaza, Union Station was conceived on a monumental civic scale as a gateway to the city. It stands on an artificial knoll created to elevate railroad traffic above the existing grade and makes use of pedestrian subways to provide access to the several tracks at the rear of the complex. As the major transportation hub for the city, it combined both local commuter-rail and inter-city service, and its location overlooking Exchange Place made connection with local and suburban trolley and bus lines easy. The large canopy over the entrance, the colonnades connecting the buildings, and the original shed over the tracks had been removed by the early 1950s, when the entire complex was painted a monochromatic grey. The complex has undergone a period of decline since the 1950s, concurrent with waning railroad passenger use. In 1976, its exterior was cleaned and returned to its original color scheme, and its interior was patched and repainted. Under the pending Capitol Center project, the complex is scheduled for recycling once the tracks are moved, and plans call for reconstruction of the eastern building. A handsome and well sited building, Union Station is a major monument of late 19th- and early 20th-century civic planning, linking local and interstate transportation systems. Its construction radically altered the topography of Downtown Providence, filling the Cove Basin and opening Kennedy Plaza. Its reliance on underground ramps and the sophisticated trusswork on the viaduct at its rear made it an engineering milestone.

FOUNTAIN STREET

Fountain Street commemorates the solution of one of the vital problems facing settlers on the west side in the 19th century, fresh water. The street takes its name from the spring, located near the present-day intersection of Dean and Fountain Streets, which supplied water to the eastern part of Downtown through a three-quarter-mile-long conduit of hollow logs laid in 1772. By 1825, the street ran from Dean Street to Mathewson Street. It was extended to West Exchange Street in 1870 and widened to eighty feet in 1915, concurrent with the widening of Empire Street and the construction of LaSalle Square.

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Fountain Street (cont.)

- 9 Providence Journal Garage (1957): 1- and 2-story, brick- glass- and aluminum-sheathed, steel-frame building with flat roofs; three irregularly placed doors on first story, brick piers and window wall on second story. This building was constructed as an adjunct facility to the Providence Journal Building to facilitate distribution of the newspaper by truck. Though unattractive, it has one point of interest, the weather flags flown from the rooftop. Colorful and intriguing, these flags add to the character of Downtown Providence.
- 30-34 Commercial Building (ca. 1920): 1-story brick building with a flat roof; irregularly placed mullioned display windows with doors interpolated randomly. In an area dominated by large office buildings, this structure is typical of the small-scale commercial buildings erected throughout the city in the early 20th century, more frequently in residential areas.
- 35-69 Providence Journal Company Building (1934, 1948): Albert Kahn, Incorporated, architect. Georgian Revival; four stories; brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a flat roof. Eighteen bays wide and nine bays deep, the building's first story, set on a stone foundation, has mullioned, round-head windows, a central entrance, and a stringcourse above the first story; 2-story, simple, brick pilasters separate the rectangular windows on the second and third stories, and a heavy cornice above the third story sets off the evenly spaced rectangular windows on the fourth story; and a simple penthouse is on the roof. Interiors were refinished in the mid-1970s by Warren Platner Associates; the lobby, in particular, is a good example of Seventies high-style corporate chic. The Providence Journal Company, founded in 1829, grew into the state's major newspaper by the late 19th century. The Metcalf family, owners of the Wanskuck Company, acquired the paper at the turn of the century and still manage the company. The Journal rapidly outgrew its 1906 building at 203 Westminster Street and constructed its present facilities in the early 1930s. The fourth story was added in 1948. The major Downtown building project during the depression years of the 1930s, the Providence Journal Company Building demonstrates the continued preference for Georgian-inspired buildings in Providence. The building with its well-scaled mass and detailing is an important part of Fountain Street.

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Fountain Street (cont.)

- 40 Gardner Building (ca. 1918, 1925): 8-story, stone-and-yellow-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a 9-story tower on north-east corner; display windows and aluminum entrance on the first story; regular piers terminating in arches above eighth floor. Built as an office building by Nathan L. Gardner, President of R.L. Green Paper Company, the structure was expanded and renovated in 1925 when Bryant and Stratton Business College occupied the building, the main alteration being the addition of the two uppermost stories. It now houses business offices and several departments of the City government. While not an assertive architectural monument, the Gardner Building is a handsome background building that defines the scale of Fountain Street and evinces the period of this area's evolution into an integral part of the downtown in the second and third decades of this century.
- 70-72 Commercial Building (ca. 1897): 2-story brick building; mid-20th-century storefront on the first story and five evenly-spaced sash windows on the second story; bank cornice with low parapet. Now isolated because of the demolition of surrounding structures this small, unpretentious commercial structure was a typical background serving as infill in the commercial fabric.
- 96-112 Palmer Block (1915): Stone, Carpenter & Sheldon, architects. 7-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with generally original storefronts and pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories resolved into 7-bay facade with each bay containing three sash windows; four upper stories sheathed in contrasting color brick; stone entablature and parapet above seventh story. The Palmer Block, built by Julius Palmer of Warwick, has housed retail stores at street level and offices on the upper floors throughout its history. It is a typical early 20th-century office building.
- 120-124 Diocese House, later Hotel Plaza, now Civic View Inn (1911): 4-story brick building with mid-20th-century stuccoed storefronts covered by an applied mansard "roof" below the second story; five evenly spaced windows between massive corner piers on upper stories; aluminum siding above fourth story covering cornice. Built by the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island as a rescue-mission, the building has since been used as a hotel. More recently it has housed one of the city's few semi-topless bars.
- 186 Commercial Building, now Burger King (ca. 1910): 1-story brick structure with three large, regularly spaced window bays on facade

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Fountain Street (cont.)

and a parapet entablature with decorative wood brackets and frieze. Now overshadowed by neighboring buildings, this building has been recently rehabilitated as a Burger King fast-food restaurant -- marred slightly by the blocked-down windows -- which has enhanced its appearance and improved the visual quality of Fountain and Empire Streets.

- 205-215 Police and Fire Department Headquarters (1938-40): Designed by the Office of the Commissioner of Public Buildings. 4-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame building with an L-shaped plan. The first story of smooth-cut stone and regularly spaced windows is treated as a basement. The pedimented projecting central pavilion with four simple pilasters is flanked on either side by 11 bays of windows on the second and third stories which are connected vertically by decorated metal spandrels. A stringcourse above third floor sets off regularly spaced square windows on fourth story and a parapet crowns the building. Interiors are plain. This structure brought the Police and Fire Departments together in one building. The central police station (1895) stood on a block bounded by Fountain, Sabin, and Beverly Streets. The first central fire station (1873, G.W. Cady, architect) at the east end of Exchange Plaza, on the site of the present Federal Building was replaced in 1903 by a second structure on Exchange Terrace (Martin and Hall, architects) on the site of the Federal Building Annex. The police and fire department building demonstrates Providence's continuing interest in a traditional architectural vocabulary for civic structures into the 1940s. Rather austere in its adaptation, this building complements the more elaborate Public Library across the street. Because of redevelopment to the north and west, however, the building's visual impact, chiefly limited to its south facade, has been lessened, for now its most visible side is its unadorned, irregular rear elevation.

KENNEDY PLAZA

Exchange Place Mall (1848, 1898, 1914, 1964): Large open space approximately 775 feet long by 250 feet wide bounded north by Washington Street, south by buildings on Kennedy Plaza, east by Exchange Street, and west by Dorrance Street; central park strip approximately 500 feet long and 90 feet wide with six regularly spaced planting pockets; Soldiers and Sailors Monument (1871) by Randolph Rogers of Rome, a stepped, octagonal monument with statuary at four corners and top, located in center of strip; Trolley Shelter (1914), Martin & Hall, architects, octagonal iron-frame-

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Kennedy Plaza (cont.)

and-glass, 1-story structure with elaborate wrought-iron decorative trim located at western end of mall. Originally known as Exchange Place, this urban open space was defined in 1848 with the construction of the first Union Station on its north side and office buildings (including the still-extant Exchange Bank Building at 28-32 Kennedy Plaza) on its south; the Cove stood just north of the station. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument was installed in 1871 at the western end of Exchange Place and remained there until moved to its present site in 1906; the monument to General Ambrose Burnside was erected in 1887, and it, too, was moved in 1906. The area was greatly expanded by the filling of the Cove in 1892 and the completion of Union Station in 1898; consequently a comprehensive design scheme for the area called for the development of this as park space and for a new Federal Building opposite City Hall. The area was renamed Kennedy Plaza in memory of the late president in 1964. The open space that comprises both Exchange Place Mall and City Hall Park is the largest and most important park in Downtown Providence. The area is an active space that has become a 20th-century version of the early town square. Though somewhat altered, it is further significant as a typical approach to the City Beautiful approach to planning at the turn-of-the-century.

- *25 Federal Building (1908): Clarke & Howe, architects. American Renaissance, 4-story, limestone-sheathed building with hip roof; rusticated first story; 3-bay central projecting pavilions on east and west facades and 10-bay north and south elevations with colossal Corinthian pilasters; full entablature with modillion cornice and balustrade parapet above; monumental marble sculptures representing America and Providence (carved by John Massey Rhind) flank the entrance on the west; handsome original interior spaces include slightly altered lobby and paneled Federal Court Suite. The product of a competition held by the U.S. Department of the Treasury in 1903, the Federal Building relieved the pressure of a burgeoning bureaucracy on the Federal Building of 1857 at Weybosset and Custom House Streets. As a handsome example of Beaux-Arts-inspired classicism, the Federal Building is a vital architectural element which anchors and defines the east end of Kennedy Plaza.
- 28-32 Exchange Bank Building (1845): Tallman & Bucklin, architect-builders. 4-story (originally 3-story) brick building with a neo-colonial, mid-20th-century storefront; 5-bay facade, 11-bay side elevation; sash windows with stone lintels, wide brick stringcourse above third story (at original roof-cornice line); boxed cornice above decorative frieze. Founded in 1801, the Exchange Bank built this structure

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Kennedy Plaza (cont.)

in 1845; it originally occupied the length of Exchange Street between Kennedy Plaza and Westminster Street. In 1888, the southern portion was replaced by the present Queen Anne style structure at 59-63 Westminster Street. Sometime in this century the fourth story was added. Construction of the Exchange Bank signaled the growing importance of the Turk's Head area as Providence's financial district. Now the oldest building in the area, Exchange Bank is an important element in the block which defines the southeast side of Kennedy Plaza.

- 55 Industrial Trust Company Building (1928): Walker & Gillette, architects. 26-story, Art Deco, granite-sheathed, steel-frame skyscraper with stepped, pyramidal massing with major setbacks above 15th, 22nd, and 26th stories and a 4-story square lantern on top; 2-story base articulated with stylized classical motifs including colossal round-head window over central entrances on Kennedy Plaza and Westminster Street; original interiors include superb classifying Art Deco banking hall with Ionic-colonnade screen around the perimeter of the room. The Industrial Trust Company, founded in 1887, first occupied a building on Westminster Street remodeled for the bank's use by Stone, Carpenter & Willson (demolished in the early 1970s). Rapid growth necessitated the large quarters provided by the current structure on the site of the Second Empire style Butler Exchange (1873; Arthur Gilman, architect), which was demolished in 1925 for the present structure. The largest banking institution in the state, Industrial, now Fleet Financial Group, remains a regionally important firm. The Industrial Trust Building, the only 1920s skyscraper in Providence, is undoubtedly the city's best-known landmark. Its stepped-back massing and Art Deco detailing relate it closely to contemporary New York skyscrapers, notably the Chrysler Building (1929-32; William Van Allen, architect) and the Empire State Building (1930-31; Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, architects); completed before the construction of either the Chrysler or Empire State Buildings, it is an early and important monument of the style. Its size and unique shape make it readily identifiable from any angle. Its siting is masterful, for as Winston Weisman has observed, a building of this scale needs an "open park-like area of sufficient size to provide a vista." Kennedy Plaza and Burnside Park furnish this necessary balance (an arrangement which anticipates the spatial organization of high-rise complexes built since) while maintaining an urban feeling.

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Kennedy Plaza (cont.)

- 70 People's Bank (1949): Cram & Ferguson, architects. 6-story, brick-and-polished-granite-sheathed, steel-frame building with flat roofs on the 6-story towers at Kennedy Plaza and Westminster Street ends of the building and a pitched skylight over the 1-story connecting block; Westminster Street and Kennedy Plaza facades identical with polished-granite first story with bronze entrances; projecting flat structural canopy above first story; brick wall surface on upper stories broken by broad continuous vertical bay of glass-block windows flanked by similar narrow bands; handsome original interior of simple oak wainscoting and vaulted plaster ceiling with skylight. Incorporated in 1857, People's Bank moved from its 1913 temple-front building on Market Square to this structure upon its completion. A tidy illustration of mid-20th-century Moderne, it is significant as the only fully realized example in Downtown Providence and provides interesting contrast with older nearby structures while maintaining the scale of the street.

MATHEWSON STREET

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the Mathewson Farm extended from Clemence Street to present-day Cathedral Square between Weybosset and Washington Streets, and the family homestead stood near today's intersection of Washington and Mathewson Streets. The farm was purchased for development in the early 1750s, and the path that became Mathewson Street was established soon after. Known as School Street from Westminster Street south -- because of the schoolhouse erected near the intersection of Chapel and Mathewson Streets in the mid-1750s -- and as Furnace Lane north of Westminster Street -- because of the forge located on that portion -- the street was renamed Mathewson Street in 1807 to commemorate its early history.

- 119-127 Former Rialto Theatre, previously Westminster Congregational Church (1829, 1902, 1950s): Russell Warren, architect for original structure; William R. Walker & Son, architects for 1902 facade renovations. 3-story, stone-and-brick-sheathed, wood-and-masonry structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; five regularly spaced 2-story round-head windows with stone trim and decorated keystones on upper stories; heavy cornice; original stuccoed rubble-stone walls exposed at rear of side walls. The Westminster Congregational Society was formed in 1828, and construction of

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Mathewson Street (cont.)

their meetinghouse began almost immediately. The stuccoed-stone octastyle Ionic temple was a fully realized academic treatment of the Greek order. The congregation moved to Adelaide Avenue in 1902. At that time, the portico was removed, a new facade was added, and the structure was converted into a movie theatre. Later changes include the conversion of this theatre into a commercial block and the demolition of the rear part of the building, leaving essentially an early 20th-century building. As an early 20th-century presence on the street, this building is similar in scale and detailing with adjacent structures.

- 128-130 Mathewson Street Methodist Church (1895, 1951): Cutting, Carleton & Cutting, architects; Arland A. Dirlam, architect for 1951 alterations. 4-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 4-bay facade with lancet windows and off-center entrance on first story; stringcourse above first story and colossal Corinthian pilasters on upper stories separating 2-story round-head windows; short segmental-arch windows in attic story; handsome Neo-Gothic interiors. Mathewson Street Methodist Church was organized in 1848 and erected its first building on this site in 1851. That structure was replaced by the present one in 1895. No doubt the church originally served the large residential neighborhood west of Dorrance Street; unlike many other churches once in the vicinity, Mathewson Street Methodist Church has been able to survive the migration of its congregation to neighborhoods beyond its immediate area. It is one of the few churches in Providence that does not rely upon traditional ecclesiastical types for their form. By the time this structure was erected, Mathewson Street was rapidly developing as a commercial area, and surrounding land use militated against a traditional church form; consequently the church is well integrated into its commercial, early 20th-century setting. Its location near Grace Episcopal Church further contributes to generation of activity in the area during non-business hours.

- 131-135 Joseph P. Cory Building (1896): 3-story, stone-and-brick-sheathed building; mid-20th-century plate-glass-and-stucco storefront and 3-bay articulation of upper stories with recessed round-head arches flanking a central projecting metal-clad bay window decorated with engaged colonettes; corbel decorative parapet. Handsome and well detailed, this building was typical of the early 20th-century commercial structures along Mathewson Street. Cory, a jewelry manufacturer, built this, probably as an investment property.

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Mathewson Street (cont.)

- 139 Lederer Building (1897): M.J. Houlihan, builder. 7-story, brick-sheathed building with elaborate 2-story entrance now covered on first story by mid-20th-century stuccoed storefronts; elaborate frieze above second story with 3-bay resolution of upper stories dominated by central projecting bay window with rounded corners; a frieze above the sixth story, elaborately framed tripartite windows on seventh story, and a heavy, boxed, copper modillion cornice supported by console brackets. Since its completion, the Lederer Building has housed the offices of a number of small businesses, primarily tailors, dressmakers, milliners, and hairdressers. It is a well designed commercial structure with fine detailing. Taller than the buildings flanking it on Mathewson Street, its articulation is similar in scale to these buildings, and its height is well integrated with nearby taller structures at Westminster Street, such as the Lapham Building and the Grace Church steeple.
- 158-172 Lapham Building (1904): Hoppin & Ely, architects. 9-story, L-shape-plan, brick-sheathed building with 2-story entrances on both Mathewson and Westminster Streets framed by decorative pilasters and decorative frieze shared with Tilden-Thurber Building (which occupies inside corner of the "L") above second floor; terra-cotta-decorated pier-and-spandrel system, third through ninth stories; elaborate frieze above eighth story, elaborate bracketed cornice. This office building, built by the heirs of Benjamin N. Lapham, is an integral part of the cluster of turn-of-the-century commercial structures in the Westminster-Mathewson Street area.
- *175 Grace Episcopal Church (1845-46, 1912, 1970): Richard Upjohn, architect. Gothic Revival brownstone building with corner tower; gable roof set end to Westminster Street over nave with flanking shed roofs over aisles; center entrance on Westminster Street flanked by lancet windows; handsome Gothic Revival interiors with sympathetic alterations; Gothic Revival Parish House (1912, Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, architects) at rear. Designed by the pre-eminent ecclesiastical architect in America at the time, Grace Church was built in 1846 primarily to serve the well-to-do neighborhood then thriving in the area. Though the neighborhood began to change during the westward expansion of commercial activity following the Civil War, the church has remained an active parish, the traditional low Episcopal Church for East side residents. The first asymmetrical Gothic Revival church in America and designed by a nationally prominent architect, Grace Church is a major downtown landmark and adds vital contrast to the streetscape.

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Mathewson Street (cont.)

- 176-178 Dyer Heirs Building (ca. 1875): 2-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century plate-glass storefronts and three paired sash windows with transoms evenly spaced on second story; simple wooden box cornice. This was built as an investment by the heirs of Benjamin Dyer on land at the rear of the family house (see 199-219 Weybosset Street).
- 182-190 Dyer Heirs Building (ca. 1885): 2½-story, wood-frame building with mansard roof; mid-20th-century metal-and-plate-glass storefronts, first story; five bays of three sash windows each on second story and dormers in roof; boxed wooden cornice with frieze below. This building, typical of the domestic-scale commercial structures that first invaded the residential neighborhoods downtown in the late 19th century, is one of the few remaining structures that illustrate this transitional form. Like 176-178 next door, it was built by the Dyer heirs as an investment.
- 183-189 Winslow Building (1912): 3-story brick-sheathed structure with original cast-iron and glass storefronts and three tripartite and projecting bay windows on upper stories; modillion cornice; original, modest interior spaces. The Winslow Building continues to house small retail enterprises and offices. This vernacular commercial structure, in almost original condition, is typical of the many buildings that contribute to the definition and continuity of the downtown as a late 19th- early 20th-century commercial district.

MEMORIAL SQUARE

World War I Memorial (1929): Paul P. Cret, architect; C.P. Jennewein, sculptor. 100-foot, fluted granite shaft with low-relief frieze around lower portion, crowned by heroic figure. In the 1920s many proposals were suggested to commemorate the men of Providence who gave their lives during the World War. After a general competition, the City Council in 1926 approved this monument, designed by a major American architect, for what was then known as Post Office Square, which had been created by the final covering over the Providence River in 1908. Following the dedication of the monument on 11 November 1929, the area was renamed Memorial Square. The construction of this monument has given definition to this open space between the buildings on Kennedy Plaza and those at the foot of College Hill east of the river. Located at the interface between Downtown and the East Side, Memorial Square provides a space of suitable monumentality as a transition into Kennedy Plaza.

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ORANGE STREET

62-66 Adlers (ca. 1922): 3-story, brick-sheathed structure with metal-and-glass storefront; three Chicago windows and 1 sash window per story above; simple band cornice. This is a typical, modest, early 20th-century commercial building.

112-116 Sadie's Lunch (ca. 1880, 1980): 3-story brick-and-masonry structure with mid-20th-century brick-and-plate-glass storefronts; and 5-bay facade on upper stories. Built for industrial use, the building is now mixed commercial-residential. For years it housed a lunchroom with a large clientele among Downtown businessmen. In 1980, it was remodeled for law offices. This is a modest background building, typical of the many once located south and west of this one.

PECK STREET

11-17 Commercial Building (ca. 1890): 2-story brick building with mid-20th-century storefront and 2nd-story bay window flanked by jalousie windows; simple band cornice.

19-33 Colorlab (ca. 1900): 5-story masonry structure with stone trim; original slightly altered storefronts on Pine Street elevation and at northern end of Peck Street elevation; regularly spaced sash windows (three on Pine Street, ten on Peck Street) on upper stories, corbeled brick cornice. Built for light industrial use, this building is now used for commercial space. A simple, well proportioned building, it is a major contributor to streetscape continuity, with a handsomely rehabilitated storefront highlighting its first story.

49 Reprostat (ca. 1870): 2-story masonry structure with low gable roof set end to the street; mid-20th century storefront; five evenly spaced windows on second story. A horseblanket factory in 1874, this structure has served a number of light industrial and commercial enterprises during its history. It is one of the very small old buildings left in downtown.

PINE STREET

59-61 Commercial Block (ca. 1920): 3-story, brick-sheathed structure with truncated corner; contemporary anodized-metal-and plateglass storefronts, regularly spaced paired and tripartite windows on second and third stories of Pine and Orange Street elevations; simple band cornice. Recently refurbished to serve as office

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Pine Street (cont.)

space, this structure was probably first used as a warehouse or light-industrial building.

- 52-60 Hanley Building (ca. 1910): William R. Walker & Son, architects. 6-story, brick-sheathed building with truncated corners; slightly altered original wood-and-plate-glass storefronts; upper stories articulated by pier-and-spandrel system with piers culminating in round-head arches above the sixth floor; heavy classicizing boxed metal cornice. Built by James Hanley, who operated a brewery, as an investment property housing light industry, this structure first housed a gold-leaf manufacturer, a dye-stuff company, a book-binder, a printer, and an electric supply company. It was converted to commercial space with the de-industrialization of this area in the mid-20th century.
- 62-74 Edward L. Aldrich Building (1883): 5-story masonry structure with slightly altered original wood-and-plate-glass storefronts, sixteen evenly spaced sash windows with granite lintels on each of upper stories, and a boxed wooded cornice. Built by Aldrich at a cost of \$40,000 and apparently first used as a wholesale grocery store, the building has, like others adjacent, become integrated into the expanding commercial and financial part of the downtown following the decline of shipping, wholesale trade, and light industry in the immediate vicinity. It is a simple and well proportioned structure.
- 158 Metcalf Warehouse (1896): 5-story, brick building with cast-iron storefronts, pier-and-spandrel articulation of upper stories; corbel cornice. Built and owned by Gustav Raedeke and his father-in-law, Jesse Metcalf, owner of the Wanskuck Company (manufacturers of worsted goods from the 1860s to the 1950s), this handsome structure was an investment property for Metcalf family members and housed a number of small jewelry manufacturers.

SNOW STREET

- 15-25 Columbia Building (1897): Fred E. Field, architect. 4-story brick structure with mid-20th-century storefronts, 4-bay articulation of second and third stories with 2-story bay windows; four small rectangular windows over each bay window on fourth story; boxed cornice with elaborate frieze and balustrade. The Columbia Building continues in original use, as a commercial block. It is one of the many fine vernacular commercial buildings erected downtown around the turn-of-the-century.

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UNION STREET

In 1772, Union Street was only one block long, from Westminster to Weybosset Street. Soon after Rhode Island's rather delayed ratification of the United States Constitution, the street was renamed to honor the unification of the thirteen colonies. By 1803, the street extended as far north as Sabin Street. Union Street was the first street in Providence to be paved with asphalt, in 1891.

- *110-116 Providence Telephone Company Building (1893, 1906): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects; Norcross Brothers (Worcester), builder. 6-story, brick-and-terra-cotta-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century storefront; upper stories resolved into three large and two narrow bays dominated by colossal Corinthian pilasters and a highly plastic decorative wall treatment with rustication and terra-cotta friezes and panels; heavy stringcourses above first, second, fifth, and sixth stories. This building introduced to Providence the intricate Renaissance-inspired terra-cotta surface ornament coming into fashion in the early 1890s and was illustrated in the prestigious trade journal American Architect and Building News on 16 September 1893. Evidence indicates that only the first three stories were completed in 1893, and the rest were added in 1906. The Telephone Company, established in Providence in 1879, grew rapidly from its beginnings. This growth rendered the Union Street headquarters obsolete within twenty years, and the company moved to its present headquarters on Washington Street -- now doubled in size -- in 1917. This structure has been used for office space since then. The Telephone Company Building is a handsome and important example of the work of the Stone, Carpenter & Willson firm.

WASHINGTON STREET

One of the later established main thoroughfares Downtown, Washington Street was no doubt named for this country's first President, like many streets, businesses, and institutions established during the years immediately following his death in 1799. By 1803, it extended

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Washington Street (cont.)

only as far west as Aborn Street, but during the following twenty years it was opened all the way to Dean Street on Federal Hill. In 1858 it reached its present western terminus at Knight Street.

- 38-52 Slade's Building (1881): High Victorian Gothic; 5-story, stone-trimmed, brick building with mid-20th-century storefronts; original plate-glass display windows, second floor; regularly spaced sash windows, upper stories; stringcourses between stories; projecting corner tower of bay windows topped with short spire; boxed decorative cornice. One of the first -- and now oldest extant -- office buildings on Washington Street, Slade's Building was erected at a cost of \$20,000 at this prominent location only three years after the completion of Providence City Hall, immediately to its east. It is one of the best High Victorian Gothic commercial blocks in Providence. For a number of years it housed Westcott, Slade and Balcom, paint purveyors, a firm partially owned by George Slade, who built this block. It is highly visible as the easternmost office structure on Washington Street and of historical importance as one of the earliest offices erected on this then primarily residential street. It was rehabilitated in the early 1980s.
- 56-70 Earle Building (1895): 3½-story, brick building with mansard roof and mid-20th-century storefronts; alternating sash and bay windows on the second and third stories in an irregular pattern; decorative lintels over windows; windows in mansard repeat same pattern; boxed, bracketed cornice with decorative frieze. The Earle Building illustrates the longevity of the mansard roof for commercial buildings; popularized as a chief component of the Second Empire Style in the 1860s, it survived almost to the turn-of-the-century, long after the Second Empire Style had been supplanted. William H. Earle erected this structure in 1895 to house his business, Earle & Prew, General Express Forwarders. Earle and Prew dealt exclusively with at least half a dozen local train and steamship lines, and remained in this location well into the 20th century. Like other commercial buildings, this one provided stores on the first story below upstairs offices.
- 85 Strand Theatre (1916): Thomas J. Hill Pierce, architect. 3-story, brick-and-stone sheathed, steel-frame building with late 20th-century storefronts; Corinthian pilasters on upper stories; decorative parapet. This motion-picture theatre was in continuous operation from 1916 until 1978. Like several other motion-picture theatres

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Washington Street (cont.)

built Downtown in the early 20th century, the Strand provided for office space in the front part of the building, both enhancing the building's income by optimizing rental space and providing something of a buffer between the street and the auditorium. Of the eight theatres constructed Downtown between 1910 and 1930, only the Strand, the nearby Schubert's Majestic (now the Lederer), and Loew's State (now the Providence Performing Arts Center) remain. In 1978, the building was remodeled to provide commercial space in the old auditorium, and the accretion of mid-20th century storefronts was replaced by a simple, more uniform treatment. The Strand is still an integral and important part of the Washington Street streetscape.

94-110 George C. Arnold Building (1923): 3-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; 7-bay pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories with Chicago windows and decorative metal spandrels; decorative boxed copper cornice supported by consoles. Erected by a real-estate developer whose house still stands in Elmwood at 238 Adelaide Avenue, the George C. Arnold Building is a handsome structure typical of the low-rise structures built in the area during the years following the Great War. Only 12½-feet deep, the George C. Arnold Building is the narrowest office building Downtown. Arnold apparently built this narrow structure after he discovered the building to its rear on Mathewson Street occupied a small portion of Arnold property -- thus this building uses the infringing portion of the adjacent structure as its rear wall. The Arnold family, which still owns this structure and the one at 120-130 Washington Street (just across Mathewson Street), has held property in this area since at least the middle of the 19th century.

120-130 Arnold Building (1896, 1930s): Clifton A. Hall, architect, 1896. 3-story, yellow-brick-sheathed structure with two sections. Washington Street portion has mid-20th-century storefronts, and its upper stories are articulated by slightly irregular alternation of paired segmental-arch sash windows and prismatic bay windows with elaborately patterned brick diaperwork panels and a corbel parapet cornice. The Mathewson Street addition also had modern storefronts, but its upper stories are filled with regularly spaced sash windows. The original structure was built by William Rhodes Arnold, father of George C. Arnold (see 94-110 Washington Street); his grandson added the portion on Mathewson Street in the 1930s, and it remains in Arnold family ownership today. Similar in scale to nearby structures, the Arnold Building, with its richly textured brickwork and many bay windows, adds variety to the streetscape. The length of ownership by one family is unusual today in Downtown Providence.

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Washington Street (cont.)

119 Hotel Dreyfus (ca. 1890; 1917): Original architect unknown; William R. Walker & Son, architects for renovation. 4-story brick-and-stone sheathing with a flat roof; rusticated brick first story; glazed terra-cotta frieze separating first and second stories; upper stories articulated by regularly spaced 3-story arches surrounding windows; decorative, glazed-terra-cotta spandrels between windows; elaborate frieze below heavy bracketed cornice. A handsome paneled bar and restaurant remains on the ground floor. The Hotel Dreyfus was a successful hotel with a popular cafe when it was completely remodeled in 1917 better to accommodate patrons in the growing theatre district. Unaltered since its 1917 remodeling, the Dreyfus is a handsome, vital part of the Washington Street streetscape.

125-137 Mercantile Block (1901): 4-story brick building with a flat roof; aluminum-sided, mid-20th-century storefronts and pier-and-spandrel articulation of facade on upper stories; stone-capped brick parapet above fourth story. This commercial block contributes both historically and visually to the creation of the present Washington Streetscape: as one of the earliest commercial blocks in this part of Washington Street, it established the building type used in later blocks along the street.

132-150 Siegal Building (ca. 1928): 4-story, brick-and-steel building with simple, modern glazed storefronts; ten bay pier-and-spandrel facade on upper stories; parapet trimmed with stone. The Siegal Building completed the commercialization of Washington Street in the central business district. Erected by Max Siegal, founder of City Hall Hardware, for many years the structure's major tenant, the Siegal Building is a typical 1920s commercial building. A larger and simpler version of the type built at 94-110 Washington Street, the Siegal Building is a good background structure compatible with its neighbors.

143-149 Commercial Block (ca. 1920): 3-story brick building with slightly altered 1920s storefronts; seven evenly spaced sash windows on second and third stories; brick parapet above third story. Similar to the Mercantile Block immediately adjacent, this building maintains the existing streetscape and contributes to its visual continuity.

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Washington Street (cont.)

- 194-200 Albert Harkness Estate Building (ca. 1906): Martin & Hall, architects. 4-story stone-and-brick building with miscellaneous mid-20th-century storefronts including the sympathetically designed corner restaurant; pier-and-spandrel articulation of second and third stories; culminating in segmental arches above third story; resolved into four bays of Chicago windows on Washington Street and seven bays on Aborn Street; two sash windows above each bay on fourth floor; wide entablature and heavy bracketed cornice. Typical of turn-of-the-century commercial buildings in Providence, the Harkness Estate Building is a well proportioned and well detailed example and adds to the visual quality of the Washington Street streetscape.
- *201 Majestic Theatre, now the Lederer Theatre (1917): William R. Walker & Son, architects. 4½-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with truncated corners on Washington Street facade; restored original storefronts and simple modern entrance on the first story; fine terra-cotta facade dominated by ornate triumphal-arch motif flanked by three bays of single-sash windows; full cornice and attic; sides and rear of the building are brick clad with little articulation; elaborately detailed lobby spaces restored; newly constructed stages and auditoriums. Built as a motion picture theatre, the Majestic continued to show films until the early 1970s, when it was converted to space for live theatre, housing Providence's nationally prominent Trinity Square Repertory Company. One of the few remaining pre-1930 motion-picture theatres Downtown (another being the recently refurbished Providence Performing Arts Center, now also converted to house live performances), the Majestic is once again a cultural focus in Providence in its new incarnation.
- 202-206 Packard Motor Car Showroom, now the Foxy Lady (1912): Albert Kahn (Detroit), architect. 2-story, glazed-polychrome-terra-cotta-sheathed building with truncated corner; mid-20th-century storefronts, Chicago windows on upper story; ornate parapet. This building was constructed to house a Packard Motor Car dealership, one of the first such enterprises Downtown. It is almost certainly the building Kahn is known to have built for the Packard Motor Car Company in Providence. Kahn, a nationally prominent early 20th-century architect, employed some of the most technologically advanced techniques of his day, including the first reinforced-concrete structure, erected as a Packard factory in Detroit in 1910. His work in Rhode Island includes the Providence Journal Building and extensive building at the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point. The Packard Showroom is the earliest and most handsome of the 2-story commercial structures in the Washington-Empire area. It is

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Washington Street (cont.)

one of the few small buildings of the period that is so richly detailed, owing, no doubt, to the prestigious image of the Packard Motor Car Company. Its terra-cotta ornamentation is akin to that of the Majestic Theatre to the north on Washington Street, and together they make an effective frame for the intersection.

- 234 New England Telephone and Telegraph (1917, 1951, 1971): Clarke & Howe, architects; Ekman Associates, architects for 1971 addition. 1917 structure: Georgian Revival 8-story, stone-and-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with marble-sheathed, arcaded first two stories; regularly spaced, stone-lintel windows on upper stories with string-courses above third and seventh stories; elaborate cornice and small ogival gable on facade. 1971: 10-story, brick-sheathed, curtain-wall steel-frame building with vertical window strips with spandrels between fixed-pane windows on lower stories, narrow vertical windows closely serried on upper two stories. The original section was an L-plan portion of the Georgian Revival building. An addition planned as early as 1931 was realized only in 1951 with the construction of a L interlocking the first L. Later expansion led to the construction of the modern southern wing in 1971. The 1917 structure, though large in scale, is handsomely detailed, and relates well to the Providence Public Library across Washington Street. It is a typical example of Clarke & Howe's work and the most monumental Georgian Revival structure Downtown. The 1971 addition is less felicitous, particularly in its stark wall treatment.

WESTMINSTER STREET

Settlement on the west side of the Providence River, which had begun in earnest with the establishment of the New Light Meeting House on western Weybosset Street in 1746, was encouraged by the opening of the Mathewson Farm (bounded by Washington, Weybosset, and Clemence Streets and Cathedral Square) for development in 1750. To improve access to this part of town, the Reverend Joseph Snow, Jr. induced the owners of this land to donate portions of their holdings for a new street from Turk's Head to Cathedral Square. The street was named Westminster, after the town in England which under the influence of George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, had become a center of liberal politics and opinions. The choice of this name reflects the separatist sentiments of area residents in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when many of them wanted to have the land west of the Providence River set off as a separate town, known as Westminster, divorced from the "despotic rule" of Providence by those dwelling on the Neck, as the East Side was then known. By

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Westminster Street (cont.)

1753, Westminster Street had been built as far west as Dorrance Street, then Muddy Dock Creek. A lottery was raised in 1763 to elevate and grade the street farther west, and by the end of the decade Westminster Street extended to present-day Cathedral Square. By 1772, the road connected Market Square on the east with Olneyville on the west; it was then known as Market Street from Market House to Turk's Head, as Westminster Street from Turk's Head to Cathedral Square, and as High Street from Cathedral Square to Olneyville. By 1827, Westminster Street was heavily built as far west as Aborn Street. The final adjustment of its name was made in 1893, when it became Westminster Street for its entire length. The portion from Dorrance to Snow Street was closed to traffic in 1964 with the creation of Westminster Mall, one of the early downtown pedestrian malls built in this country.

- *15 Hospital Trust Building (1919): York & Sawyer of New York, architects. 11-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with U-shape plan and articulated in the base-shaft-capital format characteristic of early 20th-century tall buildings; smooth ashlar first story with imposing entrance porticoes, arched windows, and Corinthian pilasters surmounted by entablature with decorative frieze and modillions; "attic" second story with pilasters and stringcourse-entablature above; smooth ashlar punctuated only by pairs of regularly spaced windows on third through ninth stories; simple stringcourse above ninth story; regularly spaced single windows separated by 2-story Ionic pilasters on tenth and eleventh stories; full entablature and classically derived balustrade above eleventh story; much of the original interior detailing remains, including the lavish banking hall and lobby. The building is connected on its west side with a modern 30-story tower built in 1974. Founded in 1867 to finance Rhode Island Hospital, the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company soon became a commercial banking institution as well, the first trust company in New England. In 1891, the company moved into a 6-story Romanesque structure at 15 Westminster Street, demolished for the construction of the present structure. In 1974, the company further expanded into the adjoining 30-story tower to the west. The Hospital Trust Building is a key landmark on lower Westminster Street because of its high architectural quality and as an important institution in Providence's financial district.
- *20 Merchants Bank Building (1857): Alpheus C. Morse and Clifton A. Hall, architects. Italianate, 6-story, brownstone-sheathed, masonry structure with trapezoidal plan; arcaded first story; balustraded

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Westminster Street (cont.)

second story with tall windows set under alternating triangular and segmental pediments; rectangular, trabeated windows with simple surrounds on third through sixth stories. The home of Merchants Bank from 1857 until its merger with the Providence National Bank in 1920, the building continues to house financial institutions and professional offices. A highly visible landmark Downtown, the Merchants Bank is of prime importance as an early building in the financial district and as the better preserved of the two remaining brownstone Italianate commercial structures Downtown.

- 59-63 National Exchange Bank Building (1888): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects. Queen Anne; 4½-story, brick-sheathed, masonry structure with mansard roof (now missing its center tower); mid-20th-century polished grey stone and plate-glass storefront; alternating bay and sash windows on third and fourth stories; alternating single and paired sash windows; fourth floor; heavy dentil cornices. Built to house the expanding National Exchange Bank, the building augmented the structure at 1-15 Exchange Street. The modern storefront, designed by Jackson, Robertson & Adams, was constructed in 1948 for Citizens Bank, which still occupies the ground floor. The Exchange Bank Building, the only fully developed Queen Anne-style commercial building Downtown, is an important part of the history of the financial district. Further, its form recalls the total streetscape of later 19th-century Westminster Street, when almost every building in the block was in an elaborate late Victorian style. Its monumental scale and high-quality details make the National Exchange Bank Building of great importance to Westminster Street and the whole Turk's Head district.

- *100 Providence National Bank Building (1929, 1950): Howe & Church, architects. Colonial Revival; 3-story, brick-sheathed, structure with flank-gable roof on Westminster facade and flat roof on Weybosset elevation; irregular plan. Westminster facade -- three bays with arcaded first story below stone stringcourse; serlian-motif window in center of second story flanked by simple rectangular windows; dentil cornice; three dormers with triangular and segmental-arch pediments, paneled balustrade at crest of roof. Weybosset elevation -- five bays with projecting center pavilion; arcaded first story; quoined corners and rectangular windows with splayed keystone lintels on second and third stories; broad entablature; gable end with oval window on center pavilion flanked by balustrade with urns. Built to house the Providence National Bank, formed by the 1920 merger of the Providence Bank and the

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Westminster Street (cont.)

Merchants National Bank, the building replaced the Lyceum Building (1858). Through corporate mergers, it developed first to Union Trust Company and later to the Industrial National Bank (now Fleet Bank) following corporate mergers in the 1950s. The building now houses Fleet Bank's Trust Department. Providence National Bank Building is a well designed small building that adds variety to the streetscape through its almost domestic scale; its form and detail evoke the early residential neighborhood in the area.

- *130 The Arcade (1828, 1980): Russell Warren and James C. Bucklin, architects; Irving B. Haynes & Associates, architects for the remodeling. 3-story granite structure with gable roof; skylight extending the length of the building. Weybosset facade -- six Ionic columns in antis with full entablature and stepped parapet above. Westminster facade -- six Ionic columns in antis with full entablature and pediment above. Original interior of three floors of shops with galleries the length of the building at each level. Built by Cyrus Butler and the Arcade Realty Company, the Arcade was the first major commercial venture on the west side of the Providence River. Since its opening, it has housed small retail enterprises and offices. In 1980, the building underwent substantial rehabilitation to improve its economic vitality: Gilbane Company, a major Providence-based building firm, was the developer. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976, it is one of the finest Greek Revival monuments in this country and has special note as a well preserved and major commercial building; it has no peer in the nation.
- 144 Lauderdale Building (1894, 1977): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects; Norcross Brothers (Worcester), builder; Michael Ertel, architect for 1977 storefront rehabilitation. 5-story Roman-brick-and-sandstone-sheathed building with terra-cotta trim; recently rehabilitated metal, black-granite, and plate-glass storefront; pier-and-spandrel articulation of upper stories; major horizontal emphases including entablature above first story and stringcourses above second and fourth stories; decorative cornice. Built as an investment property for the Butler-Duncan Land Company (heirs of Cyrus Butler and Alexander Duncan), the Lauderdale Building's design received national attention when it was published by American Architect and Building News on 30 June 1894. It continued to function as an office building until cumulative decay necessitated its closing and threatened demolition in 1975. The building was sold at that time to Kates Properties and rehabilitation efforts,

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Westminster Street (cont.)

including a sympathetic rehabilitation of the storefront, have made the Lauderdale Building an attractive location once again. It is now the headquarters for Kates Properties. One of the finest office buildings Downtown designed by the prominent Providence architectural firm Stone, Carpenter & Willson, the Lauderdale Building helps considerably to make this portion of Westminster Street the most urban -- and urbane -- in Downtown Providence.

- 150 Francis Building (1894): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects. 5-story, brick-and-stone-sheathed structure with first story colonnaded supporting a heavy entablature; upper stories contain five regularly spaced rectangular windows each; rusticated second story; brick third and fourth stories with decorative panels; brick fifth story; heavy stringcourses above second and fourth stories; bold modillion cornice. The Francis Building was built by Marshall Woods, a Brown University Corporation member, and his wife, Ann Brown Francis Woods, as an investment property. Quite similar to the adjacent Lauderdale Building, the Francis Building is a more elaborately articulated version of the same Renaissance-inspired theme with variations thereon developed in both buildings by the same architects. Of outstanding architectural quality, it adds to the coherence of Westminster Street.
- 160-162 Commercial Block (ca. 1870, ca. 1940): 4-story, brick-sheathed, stone-facade building with a poor mid-20th-century storefront; 3-bay facade of metal casement windows on upper stories; arches over 2nd-story windows; stringcourse above third story; simple band cornice. Originally three stories, this brick building had acquired a fourth story by the late 1880s. Since that time, the building has been remodeled several times, its current facade rendered rudimentarily in a classical moderne style. It is an asset to Westminster Street; in type and scale it provides continuity to the streetscape, and its reserved articulation is a foil for its more elaborate neighbors.

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- 180-204 Dorrance Building (1876, 1891): Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. High Victorian Gothic; 4-story, brick and masonry building; late 20th-century storefronts; regularly spaced sash windows with pointed, segmental, granite arches and metal bay windows second through fourth stories; boxed decorative cornice. Built to house Jerrold B. Barnaby's dry goods store, the Dorrance Building was seriously damaged by fire in 1890. Following reconstruction, the store reopened in the same location in 1891. Following the death of J.B. Barnaby, the store was absorbed by Kennedy's, which continued to sell clothing in the same location until 1978. In 1980, it was recycled to provide restaurant and office space. This handsome Victorian commercial block derives its significance from its high architectural quality; it helped to establish this area as a retail center during the post-Civil War westward expansion of the Downtown, and occupies a key intersection at the corner of Dorrance and Westminster Streets.
- 185-187 Woolworth Building (1922): 5-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; pier-and-spandrel wall articulation resolved into three bays on south (Westminster Street) and thirteen bays on east (Dorrance Street) elevation with Chicago-type bay-window infill. Built in 1922 to house the national variety store chain and to provide office space in the upper floors, the Woolworth Building replaced the Hotel Dorrance (1880, Stone & Carpenter, architects); a narrow, 2-story frame building (1855); and the gangway between these two structures. Woolworth's moved into another building farther west on Westminster Street in the 1950s; the ground floor is now occupied by a bank and a specialty shop, but the upper stories are still used as office space. The Woolworth Building is a fine reminder of post-World War I building in Providence. No doubt the construction of the nearby Biltmore Hotel (1920-22) dealt the coup de grace to the Hotel Dorrance, and its

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location between Providence's retail and financial districts made the site attractive for redevelopment. This structure, similar in scale to nearby buildings, provides continuity to the streetscape while asserting itself as a good example of 1920s commercial style.

- 191 Kresge Building (1927): Art Deco; 4-story, limestone-sheathed, steel-frame building with poor mid-20th-century storefront and 5-bay facade with pilaster strips separating vertical casement windows with transoms; decorative trim includes metal panels with Art Deco scrollwork between third and fourth stories, stylized capitals, and chevron designs in parapet; similar, simpler treatment at rear of building on Fulton Street elevation. Like the adjacent Woolworth Building, the Kresge Building was constructed to house a branch of a national variety store chain in the first story and offices above. Kresge no longer maintains a store in Providence, and the first story has been unsympathetically altered; the upper stories retain the original Art Deco articulation. Art Deco never gained great favor in Providence and little was built during the style's heyday. This building remains as a handsome, though modest, example of that style. Similar in scale to nearby buildings, it is distinguished by its crisp detailing.

- 203-209 Providence Journal Building (1906): Peabody & Stearns of Boston, architects. American Renaissance, 3½-story, terra-cotta-and-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building; mansard roof; mid-20th-century storefronts now being rehabilitated; second and third stories articulated with colossal corinthian column; heavy projecting cornice; elaborate dormers with console pediments. This structure served as the home of the Providence Journal from 1906 until the company moved into its present offices in 1934. Originally one of the most elaborate American Renaissance buildings in Downtown Providence, the Journal Building is a key landmark on Westminster Street. The building has been used by various retail stores since then and was most changed during the tenure of the J.J. Newbury variety store in the 1950s when the metal sheathing was installed, an alteration consonant with modernization fostered by the Downtown 1970 Master Plan. The clumsy and unsympathetic attempt at modernity obscured much of the building's original exterior, unveiled in 1983 as part of a major restoration effort.

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- 206-208 Gaspee Building (1876): Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. High Victorian Gothic; 5-story, brick structure with mid-20th-century storefront; two bays of paired sash windows with polychrome pointed segmental arches separated by bay window on each of upper stories; stepped decorative parapet of granite and brick with window at top center. Built on the site of the Henry T. Root Building (1866, James C. Bucklin, architect) the Gaspee Building rose contemporarily with the Dorrance Building and like the Dorrance Building, the Gaspee Building has functioned continuously as a retail commercial structure. Similar in design to the Dorrance Building, the Gaspee Building is more elaborately articulated. Together the two buildings form a handsome entrance to the retail shopping area of Westminster Mall.
- 210-216 William Wilkinson Building (ca. 1900): 5-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century plate-glass storefront; novelty brick sheathing over second story; 4-bay articulation on upper stories with paired sash windows in three wide bays on third, three windows per bay on fourth; and four windows per bay on fifth story; broad stringcourse above fourth story; corbel cornice. This commercial structure, similar in scale and massing to adjacent contemporary structures, makes fine use of the "base-shaft-capital" building form then popular in American commercial building. It is well-integrated part of the Westminster Street streetscape.
- 217 Hannah Greene Estate Building (1879): 4-story, polychrome-brick building with stone trim and recently rehabilitated cast-iron storefront; 2-bay facade of segmental arches framing paired sash windows; brick stringcourses between stories; corbel cornice; similar articulation on Eddy Street elevation. Built by F.M. Smith, a real estate developer, for the heirs of Hannah Greene as an investment property, this building has always been leased to a tenant rather than housing an owner-occupied business. The Hannah Greene Estate Building contributes significantly to the Westminster Streetscape by its fine proportions and well handled detailing. The rich patterning of the brick was recently exposed by the removal of a monochromatic paint scheme, dramatically emphasizing a previously little-regarded building. It handsomely recalls the westward expansion of commercial structures along Westminster Street.

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- 220-226 O'Gorman Building (1925): 6-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with mid-20th-century storefronts; large plate-glass windows at second story with terra-cotta stringcourse above; upper stories resolved into window bays ornamented at bottom with stylized peacocks whose tails rise 3 stories to fan out at the top of the building. Built as an office building with 1st-floor shops, the O'Gorman Building has housed small commercial concerns and offices since 1925. The building's exuberantly detailed facade adds variety to Westminster Street; its massing helps to define the scale of this block.
- 228-232 Burgess Building (1870): Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. 3½-story, stone-trimmed, brick building with mansard roof; late 20th-century storefront; stone walls with quoined corners on upper stories; late 19th-century, 2-story oriel window centered on second and third; sunbonnet gable centered in mansard with two flanking, smaller dormers. Built as an office building with retail facilities in the first story, the building housed Cady's architectural offices for a number of years, and 19th-century tenants included Bryant & Stratton Business College, a piano store, and a millinery shop. Today it houses a discount drug store. One of the earliest -- and now oldest surviving -- commercial structures on middle Westminster Street, the Burgess Building recalls the post-Civil War westward expansion of the central business district. Now altered, the building's facade is nevertheless quite lively and contributes to the architectural vitality and historic quality of the streetscape.
- 229 William H. Low Estate Building (1897): Martin & Hall, architects. Mid-20th-century storefront, little changed classicizing upper facade has rusticated stone second story with display windows separated by engaged Ionic columns; striated composite pilasters on third through fifth stories; cornice above fifth story; attic with Doric pilasters on sixth story; heavy modillion cornice. Built shortly after the remodeling of the adjacent Boston Store, the Low Building is a subtle variation on the architectural theme established by its neighbor; seldom do competing architectural firms coordinate efforts so readily and so successfully. The William H. Low Estate Building, erected by his heirs, originally housed small tailoring and millinery firms; today Woolworth's occupies the structure.

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- 236-250 Alice Building (1898): Martin & Hall, architects. 7-story, stone-trimmed, brick building with mid-20th-century storefronts; plate-glass display windows with tripartite transoms on second story; heavy cornice above second story, corner projecting pavilions on third through seventh stories; variety of surface texture on upper stories includes rustication of second and third stories and engaged columns at sixth and seventh stories; interior extensively remodeled on first story; upper stories retain original layout as shopping arcades. The Alice Building was erected as an investment property by rubber magnate Joseph Banigan and named for his daughter, Mrs. James E. Sullivan. While the concept of a large building containing small shops had been realized in the Arcade of 1828, the precedent is without successor Downtown except for the Alice Building and the later Mason Building on Weybosset Street (now altered). A handsome commercial structure and an integral part of the streetscape, the Alice Building is increased in significance by its interior shopping arcade, a use of space completely belied by its standard exterior articulation.
- 239 Callendar, McAuslan & Troup Store, now Peerless (1866, 1873, 1892): William R. Walker, architect for original building and 1892 alterations. 6-story, brick-and-stone building with mid-20th-century, stone-sheathed storefronts; rusticated stone trim on second story; paneled composite pilasters on third through fifth stories; cornice above fifth story; attic with Ionic colonettes and Doric pilasters on sixth story; heavy modillion cornice. Established as a department store -- the first of its magnitude in Providence -- in 1866, Callendar, McAuslan & Troup first opened in a smaller building on this site. The commercial venture, which soon became known as the Boston Store, was immediately successful and, having outgrown its original facilities, commenced expansion on the site in 1872. This building originally had a cast-iron facade which was removed during the 1892 expansion and remodeling. The Boston Store was bought by Peerless in the early 1950s, and Peerless continues to operate in this location. Peerless is a landmark on Westminster Street, both as the oldest of the large, late 19th-century department stores and because of its high architectural quality. The 1950s renovations are not entirely sympathetic with the elaborate articulation of the upper stories, but the building retains much of its original visual quality.

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- *259 Shepard Company Building (1870s, 1880, 1885, 1896, 1903): Architects of early sections unknown; Martin & Hall, architects for 1903 expansion. Building includes facades of previously existing buildings incorporated in this structure; 5- and 6-story, brick-, stone-, terra-cotta-, and stucco-sheathed masonry building with cast-iron supporting members; facades on Westminster and Washington Street with 2-story entrance arches at corners of Union Street and tripartite-transom display windows on two lower stories; entablature above second story with less ornate articulation above modillion cornice on Washington Street facade; original interior -- tin ceilings, hard wood and terrazzo floors -- are partially intact; late 19th-century, cast-iron clock in front of building on Westminster Street. Founded in 1880, the Shepard Company rapidly expanded to become the largest department store in New England by 1903, when it occupied the entire block bounded by Westminster, Union, Washington, and Clemence Streets. The building's physical growth was effected by construction and by acquisition of existing buildings which were subsumed into the present structure. As a "full-service department store," Shepard's remained a Providence shopping institution until the store went bankrupt in early 1974. Long a downtown landmark because of its elegant turn-of-the-century building and its reliable merchandise, the unaltered Shepard Company Building remains an important part of the central business district.
- 268-272 Train Building, now Roger Williams Office of Old Colony-Newport National Bank (1893, 1954): Frank N. Gustavson & Sons, builder for renovations. 5-story, brick-sheathed structure with 1st- and 2nd-story articulation connotatively Colonial through use of 18th-century motifs, including red-brick sheathing with stone trim and a statue of Roger Williams; upper stories resolved into piers connected by round-head arches with bay windows filling these arches; simple sash windows above arches on fifth floor; egg-and-dart cornice. The original structure visible above the second story, built for Alice B. and Elizabeth Train and Annie B. Hale, was a typical 1890s commercial structure; it remained an investment property for these women and their heirs until 1952. The renovation of the lower two stories, while avoiding the ad hoc storefront remodelings so common in the area, is nevertheless unsympathetic to the original architectural idiom. It does, however, seek to establish an historical connotation of time and place established by the bank that made the alterations and still occupies the building.
- 275 Cherry & Webb (1914): Angell & Swift, architects. 5-story brick building with marble-faced walls and display windows on first story;

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second through fifth stories articulated with four, 4-story bays capped with segmental arches with tripartite transom window and elaborately detailed metal spandrel infill; large lamps at base of each pier separating bays; ornate bracketed copper cornice. Built on the site of the Trocadero (1891), a restaurant and dancing parlor that was a center of Providence social life in the 1890s and the predecessor of Carr's (the oldest catering firm in New England), the Cherry & Webb Building was occupied by the department store from its construction until 1979. Extremely handsome in its own right, Cherry & Webb's building adds to the architectural and historical continuity of Westminster Street, and evinces the historical role of the street as the major shopping thoroughfare Downtown. It was vacated in early 1979, when the store, now known as Cherry, Webb & Touraine, was moved to Dorrance and Weybosset Streets, by its present owner, the Outlet Company. Like its neighbors, the Cherry & Webb Building is a prime candidate for rehabilitation.

- 291 Burrill Building, formerly Gladding's (1891): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects. 5-story brick-and-stone building; original cast-iron storefront with display windows slightly altered; 3-bay pier-and-spandrel system with paired double-hung sash windows and filled transoms on second and third stories; three pairs of double-hung sash windows with simple surrounds on fourth story; three pairs of round-head windows on fifth story; bracketed cornice with wide soffit. Founded in 1805 as Watson & Gladding on North Main Street, the Gladding Company was the oldest dry-goods store in Providence when it closed in 1974. Originally located on North Main Street, the enterprise moved to lower Westminster Street in 1878, and, having outgrown those quarters, moved to the Burrill Building upon its completion. In 1976, Johnson & Wales Business College bought the building. It is now converted to classrooms and a women's clothing store used as a merchandising laboratory for Johnson & Wales students. Along with Callendar, McAuslan & Troup, Shepard's, and Cherry & Webb, Gladding's was a major part of the mid-Westminster Street retail shopping block. The well-preserved Burrill Building remains a landmark on Westminster Street.
- 292 Tilden-Thurber Building (1895): Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge of Boston, architects. 4-story masonry building with classically inspired detailing including original stone pier-and-spandrel system on first and second stories with plate-glass and metal infill, colossal engaged and rusticated columns and quoined corners on

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third and fourth stories, broad Ionic entablature and ornate bracketed cornice; handsome, little-altered mahogany-cased interior space. With business antecedents in the 18th century, the present firm of Tilden-Thurber became active as a retailer of silver and jewelry in the Wheaton & Anthony Building in 1880. The enterprise thrived, and in 1895 the store moved to its present quarters. Unaltered and well maintained, the Tilden-Thurber Building is a highlight of Westminster Street.

- 317-321 Blackstone Hotel, later Kent Hotel (1911): Clarke, Howe & Homer, architects. 5-story, red-brick-sheathed building with mid-20th-century storefront; 3-bay facade with tripartite double-hung sash windows with quoin-and-keystone stone surrounds in each bay on second through fifth stories; elaborate stone modillion cornice. A modest hotel until 1976, the Blackstone has since been vacant. A handsome structure despite its modern storefront, it is a highlight of the north side of Westminster Street between Mathewson and Moulton Streets.
- 326-342 Kinsley Building (1912): Martin & Hall, architects. 5-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century storefronts and a pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories with infill of paired sash windows, quoined corners; bracketed cornice. An investment property for the heirs of Sarah E. Cranston and built as an office building with stores on the first story, the Kinsley Building continues to serve its original purpose. The Kinsley Building is a handsome example of the many commercial buildings that rose Downtown between 1890 and 1920. Now somewhat isolated by demolitions on the south side of Westminster Street, the Kinsley Building remains an important structure on upper Westminster Street.
- 327-333 Moulton Building (1889): 5-story, brick-and-stone building with mid-20th-century storefront; rusticated sandstone pier-and-spandrel wall articulation framing metal sash-and-transom windows on upper stories; corbel cornice. Built on land owned by Marion P. Simmons (the wife of a Providence cotton broker) by the heirs of William H. Low (see 229 Westminster Street), the Moulton Building was part of the Low heirs, expanding real-estate holdings Downtown in the late 19th century. It is a bold, simple, late 19th-century office building, a handsome counterpart for the nearby Kinsley Building. Less elaborately detailed than most contemporary Providence office buildings, it derives its high architectural quality from good proportions and well conceived juxtapositions of surface texture.

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- 343 Commercial Building (ca. 1928): 2-story brick-and-glazed-tile building with Art Deco-derived facade detailing with large plate-glass windows on both stories, fictile ceramic mouldings, and decorative polychrome glazed terra-cotta panels. The articulation of this building has a lively individuality that makes a virtue out of its incongruity with the whole streetscape and contributes vitality to this part of Westminster Street.
- 371-391 Conrad Building (1885): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects. 5-story masonry building with mid-20th-century storefronts, highly eclectic and imaginative articulation of upper stories with 4-story cast-iron corner tower on the southeast crowned with Moorish ogival dome and fenestration patterns drawn from numerous sources (Venetian Gothic, French, Romanesque). Erected by J.B. Barnaby and named for his son-in-law, the Conrad Building was hailed as the "finest edifice devoted to business" in the city upon its completion. Though originally used for professional offices, the structure, with ample space in its upper floors, has long appealed to students and artists as studio loft space, particularly following the decline in demand for commercial space Downtown. The Conrad Building is one of the many speculative commercial buildings erected between the Civil and First World War, a period of great prosperity in Providence; it is by far the most eccentric, and its self-conscious exuberance is probably heavily influenced by the taste of its patron, whose own house is equally elaborate.
- 400 Caesar Misch Building (1903): Martin & Hall, architects. 6-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with Art Deco plate-glass-and-stainless-steel storefront on facade, original cast-iron, 2-story storefront along Empire Street elevation and above renovated Westminster Street storefront; broad elaborate frieze above second story; elaborate stone window surrounds on upper stories; elaborate frieze above fifth story; deep, elaborate entablature below modillion cornice with decorative soffits. Built by Caesar Misch, a clothier and haberdasher, this commercial structure is now an extremely handsome culmination of Westminster Street. It is a well proportioned, well detailed building gracefully accommodated to its sloping site. The Art Deco storefront, added by Harris Fur -- the present occupants -- in the 1930s is one of those commercial renovations that, though dissimilar from the rest of the building, has a temporal and artistic integrity which makes it an interesting and significant addition to a good building.

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WEYBOSSET STREET

The oldest thoroughfare traversing Downtown, Weybosset Street was originally part of the Pequot Trail, a long route along the coast used by Indians long before the advent of the first white settlers. Its widening route Downtown recalls the area's original topographical configuration, with a bluff at the route's eastern end, now Turk's Head. This bluff on narrow Weybosset Neck hindered development west of the Providence River during the early years of white settlement, and the town was unable to afford its removal. The leveling of the bluff began in 1724, however, when Thomas Staples received permission from the town to extract the clay in the bluff for brickmaking; refuse earth from the excavation was used to fill the marshy land around Weybosset Neck. The street takes its name from this neck of land, known to the Indians as "Waubosset," meaning "at the narrow passage" and referring to the crossing point or fording place in the Providence River between the east and west sides. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, various portions of the street -- particularly from Dorrance to Chestnut Street -- were known as Broad Street, but since 1893 the entire length has been Weybosset Street. Until 1964, Weybosset Street curved north to re-join Westminster Street in front of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, but the western portion was closed by the city to create the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project parcel. In 1978, as part of the Westminster Center Project, the portion from Mathewson to Dorrance Street was narrowed to a uniform width, creating the park-like area on the street's north side.

- *7-17 Turks Head Building (1913): Howells & Stokes of New York, architects; Gilbane Company, builders. 17-story, granite-and-brick-sheathed, V-shape, steel-frame structure with arcaded, polished-granite base on lower three stories; brick walls above punctuated with regularly spaced rectangular windows in 11-story shaft; square windows on upper stories with paneled interstices; heavy modillion cornice; high-relief sculpture of a Turk's head in frieze above 3rd story. On the site of the Jacob Whitman House (1750), and the Whitman Block (1825), the Turks Head Building was built by Brown Land Company as an investment property for members of the Brown family. It has continuously housed stock brokerages, insurance firms, advertising agencies, professional offices, and a bank since its construction. Important both for its architectural quality and its role in Providence's commercial history, the Turks Head is a key downtown landmark, and dominates the financial district at the intersection of Westminster and Weybosset Street (known as Turk's Head).

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- *10 Banigan Building, later Grosvenor Building, now AMICA Building (1896): Winslow & Wetherell (Boston), architects; Norcross Brothers (Worcester), builders. 10-story, granite-sheathed, steel-frame building; half-story stone basement; rusticated first and second stories; smooth wall surface punctuated by evenly spaced recessed windows above second story; stringcourses above second, fifth, and ninth stories; massive copper modillion cornice; modern penthouse on roof; original interior including marble wainscoting, elaborate egg-and-dart moldings, and cage elevators. Joseph Banigan, born in Ireland, rose from journeyman in the jewelry industry in 1860 to the largest single importer of rubber products in the country by 1890. A founder of U.S. Rubber Company, he began to invest his considerable fortune in real estate by the mid-1890s. This, his first venture, has been continuously used as an office building since its completion. AMICA, the Providence-based insurance company, acquired the building in 1954 for use as its home office. The Banigan Building was the first tall, fireproof, steel-frame building erected in Providence. The extremely fine rendering of its detailing is typical of the Norcross Brothers firm, then the best builders in the country. Its style and massing established the precedent for other commercial buildings erected in the Turk's Head area during the 20th century.
- *24 Federal Building, later Custom House, now John Fogarty Building (1855-57): Ammi B. Young, architect. Italianate, 3-story, granite building with cast-iron supporting structure; low hip roof with hemispherical dome at center; 3-bay elevation on east and west sides, 7-bay on north and south sides; arcaded first story; pedimented windows on third story; quoined corners, wide modillion cornice with dentil frieze; interior retains original organization, including third-story courtroom with apsidal niche and the ornamental cast-iron staircase. The hemispherical dome, a highly visible component of this building, was added to the design after construction had begun and bears little relation to the rest of the composition. Built as the first Providence Federal Building, the Custom House originally housed the Federal District Court and Post Office as well as U.S. Customs. Both the court and the post office were removed to the "new" Federal Building at the east end of Kennedy Plaza upon its completion in 1908, and the post office moved to its present location in the Federal Building Annex in 1939. The Customs Agency continues to occupy the building. Ammi B. Young was architect for the Treasury Department in the mid-19th century and designed many Custom Houses and government buildings; this is

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one of his best, and an outstanding, monumental example of the Italianate style in Providence. It is extremely important Downtown, both as part of the area's historic fabric and as a key visual element in the streetscape.

- *36 Equitable Building (1872): William R. Walker, architect. High Victorian Gothic, 5-story, masonry-and-cast-iron structure with cast-iron facade; square plan with truncated corner; highly plastic wall articulation with horizontal division between second and third stories below which are engaged columns with foliated capitals on high pedestals and above which are double windows with engaged colonettes; cast-iron boxed cornice with frieze and brackets; interior extensively altered in mid-20th-century. Founded in 1859, the Equitable Fire & Mutual Insurance Company operated from quarters in Market Square until completing this building. The Equitable Building still has an insurance company as its major occupant. One of the first examples of the use of cast-iron construction in Providence, the Equitable Building is part of a core of 19th-century commercial structures that form the Custom House Historic District. The original polychrome exterior paint scheme was recently refurbished, and the building continues to function as an important part of the financial district.
- *42-46 Wilcox Building (1875, 1892, 1979): Edwin L. Howland, architect; alterations by Stone, Carpenter & Willson (1892) and Al Mancino (1979). High Victorian Gothic, 5-story, masonry structure with L-shape plan surrounding Equitable Building; asymmetrical facade on Weybosset Street appears almost as two buildings, Custom House Street facade more regular; exterior articulation is a richly elaborated decorative scheme including radiating-voussoir arches over the windows, heavily carved pier and column capitals, fictile stringcourses, and fanciful window caps. Dutée Wilcox came to Providence as an impoverished jeweler's apprentice in the 1850s; by the 1870s, Wilcox owned his own jewelry company and had erected "one of the most magnificent and costly buildings in Rhode Island." The Wilcox Building was continuously used for office and commercial space until it was gutted by fire early in January 1975. Revocation and restoration of the building, aided by city, state, and federal agencies, was carried out in 1977-79. The high architectural quality of the Wilcox Building is a major contributor to the richness and diversity of lower Weybosset Street.

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

- *45-53 Hall's Building (1876): High Victorian Gothic, 5-story, stone-trimmed brick structure with a recently refurbished storefront; eight symmetrically spaced segmental-arch windows on upper stories; horizontal divisions between each floor formed by connection of lintels; corbel bracketed cornice; interior is heavily altered. Built by real-estate broker William A. Hall, the building has continuously housed professional offices since 1876, with retail spaces in the first story and basement. More subdued than neighboring contemporary structures, Hall's Building contributes highly to the architectural quality of lower Weybosset Street.
- *48 Bank of North America (1856): Thomas A. Tefft, architect. Italianate, 4-story, brownstone-faced, brick structure with 3-bay facade (20th-century storefront); segmental-arch pediment windows on second story, triangular-pediment windows on third story; and simple trabeated windows on fourth story; quoined corners; heavy modillion cornice; interior heavily altered. The Bank of North America, founded in 1823, used this building from the time of its construction until the corporation was absorbed into the Union Trust Company in 1904. Soon afterward, the building was remodeled for retail business, and the present street-level storefront was constructed. Weiss Stationery has occupied the building for many years. One of two remaining brownstone commercial structures Downtown -- the other being Merchant's Bank -- the Bank of North America is one of the few surviving buildings by Providence's prominent mid-19th-century architect, Thomas A. Tefft. Commensurate in scale with other structures on lower Weybosset Street, its formal facade is a handsome foil for the more elaborate Equitable and Wilcox Buildings nearby.
- *54-56 Old Colony Bank Building (1927): Thomas M. James Company, architects. Neo-Federal, 11-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 3-bay facade; 2-story recessed-entrance portico below stone entablature supported by attenuated composite columns; regularly spaced stone-lintel windows above; stone stringcourse above ninth floor; modillion cornice; interior retains original marble-sheathed entrance hall with brass and bronze trim and latticework tile floor. Built for Old Colony Cooperative Bank (which merged with Newport National Bank in the late 1960s), the building has continuously functioned as a bank since its completion. The character and scale of the historical architectural motifs incorporated into the building's design represent an aesthetic anomaly typical of many corporate headquarters: the functional demands of a bank's

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

offices require a multiple-story structure, but the nature of the business dictates the use of a traditional decorative vocabulary. This is a fine and interesting example of its type.

- *55-61 Old Stone Bank Trust Department (ca. 1945): Neo-Federal, 3-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 7-bay facade; stone first story with tall rectangular windows and entrance at eastern end; balustraded round-head windows with blind fans on second story; smaller rectangular windows on third story; simple boxed cornice with parapet above; original Neo-Federal interior. The building housed the Trust Department of Old Stone Bank and is now a men's clothing store. A well-proportioned Neo-Federal building, the structure maintains continuity of scale and adds to the architectural diversity of lower Weybosset Street.
- 65 Arcade (1828): See 130 Westminster Street.
- *75 Atlantic Bank Building (1866, 1978): Elizabethan, 3-story, brick-and-masonry structure; 3-bay facade of ornately carved puddingstone with round-head windows on each story and corbel stringcourses between stories; ornate bracketed cornice. This building was constructed in 1866 to house the Atlantic Bank. The bank reorganized and moved to larger quarters in the Banigan Building in 1906 before closing its doors in 1913. In the 20th century this building housed offices, a photography studio, and -- until 1976 -- the Rhode Island Bible Society. It has recently undergone exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation to accommodate professional offices. The Atlantic Bank Building recalls the long history of this area as a financial and commercial center. The delicate surface decoration of this small structure provides a fine contrast to Russell Warren's powerfully composed Arcade next door. Its exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation in 1978 for professional offices has brought much-deserved attention to this handsome building.
- 86 Studley Building (1894): Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. 6-story, brick structure with mid-20th-century aluminum-frame-and-plate-glass storefront; paired regularly spaced granite-lintel windows on second through fourth stories, paired round-head windows on fifth story, narrow regularly spaced windows on sixth story; heavy modillion cornice; interior extensively altered in the mid-20th century. Built as an office building -- perhaps as an investment -- by George H. Darling (principal in T. Curtis & Company, brush makers), the Studley Building is a good example of turn-of-the-century vernacular commercial architecture.

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

- 100 Providence Gas Company Building (1924): Clarke & Howe, architects. 5-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with "Colonial" detail, including an ogee gable on the Weybosset Streetfront. Clarke & Howe's Colonial Revival design not only maintains the continuity of the streetscape quite handsomely, but also, in the use of the ogee gable, makes specific reference to a Providence colonial prototype, the Joseph Brown House at 50 South Main Street, which inspired a number of Colonial Revival buildings throughout the state.
- 123-139 RZL Realty Company Building (1926): Angell & Swift, architects. 3-story, brick-and-steel-frame structure with various modern storefronts; 5-bay facade on second and third stories consisting of raised piers and recessed spandrels with triple windows in four westernmost bays and single sash window in eastern bay; stone corbel cornice with parapet above. Built to house, among other enterprises, a Chinese restaurant, the building continues to provide space for small retail shops. A good example of 20th-century vernacular commercial architecture, the building contributes to the visual continuity of the streetscape.
- 145 Commercial Building (ca. 1925, 1960s): 1-story stuccoed masonry structure with truncated corner containing entrance with applied broken-scroll pediment and flanking "carriage lamps"; large plate-glass display windows on Weybosset and Eddy Street elevations; signage dominating the blank wall above fenestration. The building's exterior, altered for a men's clothing store, has the large-scale exterior graphics and simple articulation typical of 1960s storefront design; the "carriage lamps" and the broken-scroll pediment over the door are similarly tied to a connotative message of the traditional, anomalously typical of 1960s retail-establishment renovations.
- 151 Second Universalist Church (1847-49): Thomas A. Tefft, architect. Romanesque Revival, 3½-story, brick structure with end-gable roof; 20th-century storefronts; 2nd-story windows infilled, five round-head windows with voussoirs and connecting imposts on third story, centered round-head window with tracery flanked by two lunette windows below datestone in attic; simple corbel cornice; irregular fenestration on Eddy Street elevation. Built as the Second Universalist Church, the building housed the first private normal school in Providence by 1852, the antecedent of Rhode Island College. The

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

structure was converted to commercial use later in the 19th century and continues thus today. Significant both as one of the few remaining buildings designed by Providence's eminent mid-19th-century architect, Thomas A. Tefft, and as a reminder of the generally residential nature of this part of the downtown before the Civil War, the Second Universalist Church building, though heavily altered both inside and out, adds architectural variety to the streetscape in a block of vernacular buildings.

- 155-159 Commercial Block (ca. 1915): 3-story stone-and-metal-sheathed building with mid-20th-century aluminum-and-glass storefronts, recessed wall surface with two 2-story Egyptoid columns in antis separating three Chicago windows on second and third stories, quoined corners; decorative frieze on boxed cornice.
- 165-169 Mason Building (1903): Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects. 6-story, brick-and-metal-sheathed, steel-frame structure with late 20th-century storefront; 4-story, 3-bay articulation of upper stories with three Chicago windows on each story, corbel cornice; modern interiors. Recently rehabilitated, the structure was built by the John N. Mason Real Estate Company and used as a commercial and office space. While more massive than neighboring structures to its east, the Mason Building is similar in style to these commercial structures. It is harmonious in style and scale with the Fletcher Building to its west and the Outlet Company across Weybosset Street.
- 168-176 Outlet Company Store (1891; 1894; 1903; 1912; 1914; et seq.): 5-story, steel-frame structure sheathed with white brick and terracotta; pier-and-spandrel wall articulation with large display windows on first story; round-head bays with decorated keystones and stucco work, third through fifth stories; Chicago windows in bays; elaborate entablature with ornate frieze and heavy brackets; interior decoration modified throughout building's history; but original spatial organization remains. Begun in 1891 in the newly constructed Hodges Building (which remains as the central part of the building), the Outlet Company grew rapidly, and by the 1920s occupied the entire block; the store closed in 1982. The Outlet Company is a key landmark on Weybosset Street, important to the fabric of Downtown.
- 171-174 Fletcher Building (ca. 1895; 1903): Geo. Waterman Cady, architect; Clarke & Howe, architects of remodeling. 5-story, brick-sheathed,

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

steel-frame structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; main entrance in quoined pavilion on Union Street; 5-bay facade of pier-and-recessed-spandrel system with Chicago window infill second through fifth stories culminating with panels and cartouches above which are simple rectangular windows and round-headed windows on top floor. Built as an office structure in the 1890s, the Fletcher Building was extensively remodeled in 1903 when the top three stories were added. It continues to function as an office building.

- 198-204 Providence Athletic Association, later the Crown Hotel (1894; 1901): Gould, Angell & Swift, architect. 7-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 1980 storefront (a simulacrum of the original); wide bay windows centered in facade with flanking trabeated windows on third and fifth stories, heavy cornice above fifth story; boxed cornice; side elevation has similar system of alternating bay and sash windows; interior remodeled mid-20th century. Originally built as a clubhouse for the Providence Athletic Association, the building was converted to hotel use when the top two stories were added in 1901. While the building remained in use as hotel into the 1950s, it suffered gradual deterioration, and was finally bought by Johnson and Wales Business College for dormitory use.
- 199-219 Benjamin Dyer Block (ca. 1820, 1882): John Holden Greene, architect. 3½-story, stone-trimmed, brick structure with mansard roof on eastern half and hip roof with monitor on western half; 19th- and 20th-century storefronts; regularly spaced double-hung sash windows with brownstone surrounds on second and third stories and two bay windows symmetrically arranged on second and third stories of eastern half; modillion cornice; interiors are late 19th-century offices with no trace of original arrangement. Built for his four daughters by Benjamin Dyer, a principal in the merchant firm of B. & C. Dyer & Co., this handsome, Federal-style 200-foot-long row had an 18-bay facade comprising four attached row houses of four and five bays each; each of the four entrances were recessed and set under a brownstone arch. Paneled balustrades rose at the edges of the hip roof and the monitor. By 1882 the block had devolved to Thomas J. Stead and Salma Manton, sons-in-law of Benjamin Dyer. About this time the eastern half, belonging to Stead, was remodeled with its present Second Empire detailing. The first story has been continuously remodeled to accommodate commercial enterprises. Originally similar in scale and architectural quality to the Stephen Waterman House to the east, the Dyer Block, though heavily altered, has suffered less in the commercialization of the area, and remains

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

the most readily identifiable remnant of the handsome late 18th- and 19th-century residential neighborhood obliterated by later commercial expansion of the central business district. Preservation of this important Downtown structure should be encouraged.

Weybosset Street Comfort Station (1913): Martin & Hall, architects. 1-story, cast-iron-and-masonry building with two entrances to subterranean restrooms, one each on north and south sides; ornate cast-iron trim with brick and granite used as secondary ornamental sheathing. Built as a comfort station, the building deteriorated over the years and has been long unused in recent years. Originally located on a traffic island in the middle of the street, this small structure is now part of a pedestrian area created in 1978 as part of the Westminster Center project by the city (see Westminster Mall entry). The focus of this recent Weybosset Street redevelopment, which created a small pedestrian plaza on the north side of the street, the comfort station's recycling would make it a once-more vital part of Weybosset Street activity.

214-216 Bush Company Building (1873): Late Italianate, 4-story, masonry structure with brownstone facade; 4-bay facade with rehabilitated storefront; trabeated windows on second, segmental arch windows on third, and round-head windows on fourth story; decorated string-courses between stories; heavy bracketed cornice; interior remodeled in mid-20th-century. Built to house the Charles S. Bush Company (electrical construction and supplies, drugs, chemicals, and dye-stuffs), the building was used for retail sales and -- increasingly less -- as office space. The building was vacated following a fire in the first floor restaurant in February 1977; it underwent renovation beginning in 1980. The Bush Company is a relatively rare survivor of the many Italianate commercial structures once so common Downtown. It is similar in scale to nearby structures on Weybosset Street, but the boldness of its original detailing and its corner location increase its importance to the streetscape.

*220 Loew's, now the Providence Performing Arts Center (1928): C.W. & George Rapp of Chicago, architects. Externally, a fairly restrained 4-story, brick-and-terra-cotta-sheathed, steel-frame structure with irregular 6-bay facade with fluted pilaster strips, molded panels, castellated parapet with plateresque detailing; modified original prismatic marquee; original interior detailing derived from Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, and Art Deco sources includes elaborate low- and high-relief sculpture, gilded trim, and

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domed ceiling. The building has functioned continuously as a theatre since its construction. It was renovated by B.A. Dario in 1975, but declining profitability threatened its demolition in 1977. The building was finally purchased by a consortium of local businesses, with city and state help, and opened as the Ocean State Performing Arts Center in October 1976; it achieved almost instant success. One of the last buildings constructed during Providence's "century of prosperity", the Providence Performing Arts Center, as it is now known, not only contributes to the visual richness of Weybosset Street, but more importantly injects vitality into the life of Downtown.

- 225-227 Commercial Building (ca. 1920): 2-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with false-front pantile-covered hip roof and truncated corner; brick pier-and-spandrel wall articulation with aluminum, plate-glass, and enamel panel infill on the first story and double sash windows on the second story; boxed cornice with decorative frieze and brackets. The building is stylistically coherent with the majority of the buildings in the area, and contributes to the commercial streetscape.
- 244-248 Warwick Building (1891): 3-story brick building with domed turret at northeast corner; mid-20th-century storefront, regularly spaced single and paired sash windows on upper stories, bracketed cornice. Stone, Carpenter & Willson's Conrad Building of 1885 probably inspired this slightly later, less elaborate version built by Mary E. Harrington at a cost of \$16,000. The building is a handsome, integral part of upper Weybosset Street.
- 249-257 Commercial Building (ca. 1940): 3-story, brick-sheathed steel-frame structure with pier-and-spandrel wall articulation casement windows, and terra-cotta trim. This mildly Art Deco building, typical of mid-20th-century, small-scale commercial development in the central business district, bends its facade to follow a bend in the street.
- 56-260 Avery Building (ca. 1925): 2-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a flank-gable roof; glass and aluminum storefront below seven tall fixed, single-pane windows (recent replacements of the original casements) with wrought-iron grillwork on the second story. This building continues to house the piano store for which it was built. The storefront provides continuity in streetscape, and the building's small scale is typical of the

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

commercial structures erected in the western part of the downtown during the 1920s.

- 259-263 Commercial Structure (ca. 1890): 4-story brick building with 20th-century storefronts and six regularly spaced windows with granite hood molds on upper stories; corbel cornice. Similar in scale to adjacent commercial structures, this building is a handsome background building on Weybosset Street; its rusticated hood molds, its only ornamentation, increase its visual quality.
- 262-266 Dwight Building (1892): 4-story brick-sheathed structure with metal and plate-glass storefronts, a-a-a-b fenestration scheme on upper stories consist of three stacks of projecting bay windows flanked by a stack of single sash windows; scalloped parapet. Built for Central Real Estate Company, which owned a number of buildings Downtown, this building continues to function as commercial and office space. The same scale as surrounding structures, this building is typical of late 19th-century commercial structures and, through its detailing, lends variety to the streetscape.
- 267-271 Abbott Park Hotel (ca. 1900): 7-story brick building with truncated corner; slightly altered original entrance on the first story and regularly spaced Chicago windows on Weybosset and Snow Street elevations on the upper stories; heavy stringcourses between stories; wide bracketed cornice. The Abbott Park Hotel is a rare survivor of the many turn-of-the-century downtown hotels. It is little altered, and remains an important visual element on the Weybosset Streetscape, largely because its position at a curve in the street makes it visible from a distance to the east.
- 270 Richmond Building (1876, 1979): High Victorian Gothic; 4-story, brick-and-stone building with truncated northwest corner; early 20th-century storefront, slightly altered in 1979, five regularly spaced windows on each of the upper stories with shallow incised designs, second story emphasized by Gothic-arch niche flanked by colonettes on east end of facade; stringcourses defining each story; wooden bracketed cornice. Built probably as an investment property for F.H. Peckham, a surgeon who lived at 59 Snow Street, the Richmond Building was used for many years for offices and small retail enterprises. It has recently undergone rehabilitation, including restoration of the original polychrome masonry scheme, for office and commercial space. Similar to and perhaps inspired by the Wilcox Building of 1875 on lower Weybosset Street, the Richmond Building,

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

with its exuberant High Victorian detailing, is a landmark on upper Weybosset Street.

274 Summerfield Building (1913): Albert Harkness, architect. 6-story, reinforced-concrete-frame building with glass walls of Chicago-type windows, terra-cotta piers and spandrels; elaborate cornice with egg-and-dart frieze; central decorative cartouche; wide eaves. Built by the Harkness family as an investment property, this building takes its name from the Boston-based Summerfield Furniture Company, which occupied quarters here for many years. The building, having housed a number of smaller concerns in the 1960s and early 1970s, was bought by Johnson & Wales Business College and now houses offices and classrooms. Undoubtedly one of the most handsome early 20th-century buildings in Downtown Providence, the Summerfield Building is noteworthy for its bold, simple lines, its use of expansive areas of glass, its handsome terra-cotta sheathing, and its simplified detailing evocative of Renaissance palazzi. Directly east of Abbott Park, it forms an effective frame for the oldest park in the city.

275 Commercial Block (1925): 3-story brick building with mid-20th-century stone-and-plate-glass storefront below three wide window bays with one narrow sash window at the western end on the second and third stories; decorative brick parapet with raised center section.

283-285 Office Building (before 1874): 3-story brick building with mid-20th-century, aluminum-and-glass storefront and five evenly spaced sash windows on each of the upper stories; band cornice. This structure is an early part of the commercial development of upper Weybosset Street.

287-291 Champlin Building, now Paris Theatre (1895): Martin & Hall, architects. 4-story, stone-trimmed, brick structure with mid-20th-century theatre entrance on the first story; colossal engaged Composite pilasters on the upper stories; decorative cornice. Long the home of the Providence Central Club, a men's club which flourished in the early years of the 20th century, the structure has been put to use in recent years as a motion picture theatre. In spite of poor alterations -- especially to the first story -- the Champlin Building retains much of its character and if rehabilitated, could be a highlight of the western end of Weybosset Street.

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- *300 Beneficent Congregational Church (1809, 1836): Barnard Eddy and John Newman, architect-builders; James Bucklin, architect of 1836 alterations. Greek Revival, brick-sheathed, masonry structure with low end-gable roof below hemispherical gilded dome and lantern at center; 5-bay facade with central Greek Doric tetrastyle entrance portico; 5-bay side walls; plain boxed cornice (continuation of the corona of entrance portico); roof parapets with Greek fret-work detailing; interior largely original, with some alterations dating from 1836. The building continues to house the congregation, established in 1743 in this area, that constructed this building in 1809. The oldest religious structure on Providence's west side, Beneficent Congregational Church is a key Providence landmark, visually dominating the upper end of Weybosset Street, a role befitting the institution that initiated the permanent settlement of that part of the city west of the Providence River.

NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

ABORN STREET

- 31-37 Commercial Building (ca. 1900): 1-story, brick-sheathed building with mid-20th-century aluminum-and-plate-glass storefronts. Originally three stories, this building has lost its upper floors. It was once a typical turn-of-the-century commercial structure with stores at street level and offices above.

CHAPEL STREET

- 48-50 Parking Garage (ca. 1960): 2-story, reinforced-concrete structure with concrete parapets on each floor. Built in anticipation of the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project and heavily patronized by workers there, this deck, one of the least attractive structures in Downtown Providence, is an unfortunate frontispiece to the city for travelers arriving from the west.

DORRANCE STREET

- 1 Avis Rent-a-Car Office (1960): Prefabricated, 1-story office dominated by aluminum-frame windows on all sides and large back-lit plastic graphics. Its bold, "look-at-me" design is typical of nationwide chain operations that depend on buildings as signs.

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Dorrance Street (cont.)

Functionally this is an ideal location, within sight of the city's train and bus stations and next to its principal hotel, but it is visually out of place beside the Biltmore.

- 10 Howard Building (1957-59; 1968): Albert Harknss and Peter Geddes, architects; Robinson Green Beretta, architects for addition. 10- and 12-story, reinforced-concrete structure with stone-sheathed storefronts with plateglass windows, regularly spaced small rectangular windows with alternating pre-cast concrete panels on upper stories of Westminster Street ell. These buildings are the nadir of large office-building design Downtown. Construction of the present office building began in 1957. This, the fourth Howard Building, is a poorly designed structure, entirely inappropriate in its setting: the early portion is bland; the later, poorly sited. It has a negative impact on the intersection of Dorrance and Westminster Streets and also detracts from the visual quality of Kennedy Plaza to its north.

- 98-106 Narragansett Garage (1923): 3-story, brick-and-concrete structure with automobile entrance at center of first story with flanking doors and windows; evenly spaced paired windows on upper stories, all blocked down; simple parapet around roof. Built as a parking garage for the Narragansett Hotel (which stood across Dorrance Street until its demolition in 1960) and now unsympathetically altered, the structure is the oldest parking structure Downtown.

EDDY STREET

- 13 Biltmore Garage (Shoppers Parkade, 1968): 5-story, reinforced-concrete structure. Built to provide parking for and connected by a "skywalk" to the adjacent Biltmore Hotel, the structure still serves as a major parking garage Downtown, though it is no longer owned by the hotel.

EMPIRE STREET

- 130 1 Empire Place (1982): Robinson Green Beretta, architects; Gilbane Co., builders. A 6-story steel-frame building sheathed in brick with truncated corners and soldier-coursing detail. This is a simple modern office building.

FOUNTAIN STREET

- 132 Commercial Building, McDonald's (ca. 1915): 2-story brick building

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Fountain Street (cont.)

with late 1970s storefront sheathed in new "antique" brick and fenestration on both stories irregularly placed under segmental arches of varying widths. This retail commercial building was modified to accommodate a McDonald's fast-food restaurant, and its original storefront was obliterated by inappropriate alterations.

KENNEDY PLAZA

- 66-68 The Ming Garden (1903): 3-story brick building with tiled modern entrance (similar entrance on Westminster Street side of building) and large plate-glass windows on upper stories; modern interiors by Morris Nathanson (ground floor) and Ira Rakatansky (upper floor). Though architecturally undistinguished outside, the building is heavily altered. The Ming Garden is a major Providence institution and the longest lived of a popular type, the Chinese restaurant, which has been an important part of the urban scene since the early 20th century.

MATHEWSON STREET

- 112 Plymouth Block (1892): 2-story, masonry structure with mid-20th-century storefronts, and bay windows at either end of the second story -- now sheathed with aluminum siding -- with aluminum-frame sash windows in center. The Plymouth Block was built by Central Real Estate Company, investors in commercial property. Heavy alterations now obscure the facade and the interior of this building.
- 174 Commercial Building (ca. 1910-20): 1-story, wood-frame structure with double door occupying narrow width of building. Squeezed between two commercial structures, this tiny store is scarcely noticeable, a covered passage in effect.

ORANGE STREET

- 72-78 Commercial Building (ca. 1870): 3-story, stuccoed masonry building with a flat roof; two doors evenly spaced between three windows on first story; and three evenly spaced windows on upper stories; simple wood boxed cornice.

SNOW STREET

- 119-125 Snow Street Garage (ca. 1925): An altered and deteriorated 4-story, brick-sheathed structure with pier-and-spandrel walls with louver windows. This building is one of the oldest automobile parking garages Downtown. These early garages provided automobile service as well as parking for the many private automobiles growing in number following World War I.

WASHINGTON STREET

- 93-115 Commercial Block (ca. 1927): 1-story brick building with mid-20th-century plate-glass, aluminum and enamel storefronts below large stucco cove cornice. Reduced from several stories to one in the
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Washington Street (cont.)

mid-20th-century and the original storefronts replaced by the current kaleidoscopic array, this building now appears as a mid-20th-century structure.

- 165 Majestic Shoppers Parkade (1964): Ramp Engineering Company, builders. 3-story reinforced-concrete structure with concrete pier walls with glazed-brick and metal-panel infill. Recommended by the 1960 plan, Downtown Providence, 1970, the Majestic garage, taking its name from the adjacent theatre, is typical of the massive parking structures erected here and elsewhere in the 1960s.
- 184 First Bank and Trust Company (1972): William Blume, architect. 2-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure; 1-story drive-through wing; brick walls with concrete panels over the entrance and the first story plate-glass windows. Smaller but more massively scaled than adjacent buildings, this design is more appropriate to a suburban setting than to downtown.

WESTMINSTER STREET

- 25 One Hospital Trust Plaza: Hospital Trust Tower (1974): John Carl Warnecke & Associates, architects. 30-story, steel-frame tower with plate-and-travertine curtain wall and truncated corners; 2-story piers with plate-glass infill on first and second stories; evenly spaced, fixed-pane windows flush with wall surface on third through twenty-eighth stories; twenty-ninth and thirtieth stories windowless and sheathed in travertine; building connected on its east side with 15 Westminster Street, the 1919 Hospital Trust Building (1892 remodeling of an earlier structure), this tower was completed to accommodate the expansion of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company as well as to provide more Class-A office space in Providence's financial district. The second tallest building Downtown, this monolithic tower dominates the skyline from every direction. The lights that circle the building at its top provide nocturnal identification of this structure in much the same way as the lantern on the nearby Industrial Bank Building.
- 40 Old Stone Bank Tower (1969): Shreve, Lamb & Harmon Associates, architect. 23-story, reinforced-concrete tower with marble-sheathed first story and curtain walls of tinted glass recessed in the deep reveals of a concrete-aggregate grid on upper stories. The first modern "high-rise" tower in Downtown Providence, this tower is neither a cohesive composition in itself nor sympathetically scaled to adjacent structures. Since its construction, the building has housed Textron, one of Rhode Island's most important mid-20th-century corporations.

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Westminster Street (cont.)

- 99 Fleet Center (1983-84): Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum, Inc., architects; Gilbane Building Company, builders. A 20-story, steel-frame, granite-and-glass-sheathed structure with a prominent stepped-back top. Fleet Center is a collaborative effort of Fleet National Bank (formerly Industrial National Bank), Gilbane Building Company, and Nortek, Inc. It is a handsome building well suited to its setting in the middle of the financial district; it is listed as non-contributing by virtue of its newness.
- 110 First Federal Savings and Loan Building (1960 remodeling of an earlier structure): Robinson Green Beretta, architects for remodeling. 2-story, steel-and-masonry structure with facade articulated into five bays by anodized aluminum strips with concrete-and-plate-glass infill. This small structure was typical of early 20th-century infill buildings Downtown; its remodeling has, however, obscured its position in an historical context and effectively makes it a mid-20th century building.
- 252 People's Bank (1969): Robert Hill, architect. 4-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with plate-glass-and-aluminum entrance on Westminster Street and remaining wall of solid brick, diagonally stepped-back wall system with windows on each story on Union Street elevation. This bland building houses a branch of the main bank on Kennedy Plaza as well as bank offices.
- 260 W.T. Grants Building (1949): Leland & Larson (Boston), architects. 4-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with stone-sheathed first story with plate-glass-and-aluminum display windows and projecting structural canopy; windowless upper stories used as a billboard across which spread the company logo. Built on the site of B.F. Keith's Theatre (Westminster Street) and Low's Grand Opera House (Union Street), the building housed a branch of the Grants variety-store chain until that firm's bankruptcy in 1976; it now houses small retail shops on the first floor. The building is bland and out of scale here.
- 276-282 Wit Building (ca 1925): 2-story masonry structure with plate-glass-and-aluminum storefront and a tile-sheathed upper story used as a background-billboard for a sign for the store. The Wit Building housed a shoe store for many years until a women's retail shop remodeled the building and moved in during the 1950s. The building was occupied, upon the dress shop's closing in 1980, by a bookstore.
- 299 Tillinghast Building (1893, 1959): 2-story masonry structure with glass-and-aluminum storefront and a windowless stuccoed wall on second story. Lloyd A. Tillinghast was a Providence businessman who had formed the L.A. Tillinghast Corporation in 1891 for the

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Westminster Street (cont.)

operation of a restaurant and dancing parlor, the Trocadero; in 1906, Mr. Tillinghast and his secretary -- and by then his wife --- Laura M. Carr formed the catering firm that still bears her name. At a cost of \$25,000, Mr. Tillinghast engaged Houlihan and McGuire to build this structure, which was one of several he owned in the area. Originally five stories high and similar to the nearby Lederer and Lapham Buildings, the Tillinghast Building was drastically altered by the removal of the upper three stories and the radical remodeling of the remainder. Ira Rakatansky was the architect who converted this into a "modern" structure consonant with the city's goals established in the 1959 Master Plan.

- 303-305 Commercial Building (ca. 1872): 4-story masonry building with mid-20th-century aluminum, glass, and ceramic-tile storefront on first and second stories; 3-bay cast-iron facade on third and fourth stories articulated by Romanesque colonettes, heavy stringcourses, and bracketed cornice. This commercial building is part of the post-Civil War commercial expansion in Downtown Providence. Its inappropriately altered facade is typical of mid-20th-century modernizations.
- 307-309 Commercial Building (ca. 1885): 3-story masonry building with mid-20th-century facade on diverse unrelated elements. Heavily altered, this building is a victim of poorly conceived yet typical mid-20th-century modernization.
- 311-313 Commercial Building (ca. 1930): 2-story masonry building with mid-1970s wood-and-late-glass storefront and large plate-glass windows on second story. The architectural integrity of this building has been severely compromised by renovations which attempted to remove its perceived stigma of antiquity in the middle of this century.
- 360 Federal Building (1983): Robinson Green Beretta, architects. A 5-story, steel-frame, brick-sheathed building with a recessed center entrance. This building is similar in scale, materials, and massing to nearby, turn-of-the-century commercial buildings.

WEYBOSSET STREET

- 122 Broadcast House (1979): Providence Partnership, architects. 2- and 3-story, black-granite-sheathed, steel-frame building with irregular massing and irregular fenestration. Broadcast House was constructed by the Outlet Company to house its radio and television stations and Cherry, Webb & Touraine, a women's clothing store owned by the Outlet Company and located for over sixty years on Westminster Street. One of the very few major private investments in new construction Downtown during the 1970s, this building is out

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Weybosset Street (cont.)

of scale with nearby structures, and its materials and detail further isolate it visually and historically.

- 179-189 Stephen Waterman House (1823 et seq.): John Holden Greene, architect. 2-story central section with 1-story addition; all now with flat roofs; 20th-century-storefronts; 5-bay facade and 4-bay side elevations of brick second story. Designed and built as a 3-story Federal dwelling for prominent merchant Stephen Waterman by Providence's premier early 19th-century builder architect, John Holden Greene, the structure was used as a house until Mrs. Waterman's death in 1881. It was then converted to commercial use, and 1-story shops were added along the front and sides. In the 20th century, the ground floor was gutted and the third story removed. This was once one of the most imposing early 19th-century dwellings in the Downtown area, surpassed only by Greene's long-gone Hoppin House on Westminster Street.
- 210 St. Francis Chapel (1956): 3-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building; simple articulation with deeply recessed entrance on Page Street and regularly spaced sash windows. The Chapel was built by the Franciscan Order to house facilities for its ministry. It is bland and trivial.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Community |
| Specific dates | See Inventory | Builder/Architect | See Inventory | Development |

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Downtown Providence Historic District is a highly cohesive urban environment which evinces its growth from an agricultural adjunct to the east side of the city (the site of its original settlement) into the vital core of the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island. The district's homogeneity is richly complex, for many forces have shaped it. The district's buildings chronicle the history of architecture from Federal buildings of the early nineteenth century through the vast array of commercial types and styles of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the financial and commercial center of the state since about 1800, Downtown is of major importance to the history of commerce. The area's parks and open spaces, created and designed around the turn of the century, are significant to the history of landscape architecture. Since the mid-years of the nineteenth century, Downtown has been a major governmental center, both for the city and federal offices. The six remaining churches Downtown make the area significant to the history of religion. Sculpture--both as public, civic monuments and as architectural ornament--are important components of Downtown's built environment. Downtown has long been the state's theatrical center, as seen in the three remaining structures. Downtown Providence is historically the junction of major transportation routes: waterways, railroad, highways to the hinterland, and urban and inter-urban mass transportation lines. Moreover, the growth of the area and its building patterns reflect mainstream attitudes toward the civic, commercial, and cultural development that characterizes the birth and evolution of a central business district as a nineteenth- and twentieth-century urban phenomenon.

Providence was settled on the east side of the Providence River by Roger Williams and his followers in 1636. These refugees from the monolithic Puritan society in the Massachusetts Bay Colony established a settlement based on religious freedom and separation of church and state. Unlike other New England settlers, the founders of Providence (who built no church until 1700) had no use for a square of common ground dominated by a meeting house, and the town grew in linear fashion along a major axis, Main Street, which parallels the Providence River on its east.

The area west of the Providence River, known as Weybosset Neck, remained unsettled for a century after colonization. The land was unappealing, dominated at its eastern end by the steep Weybosset Hill, which was surrounded by marshy lowlands and traversed by Muddy Dock Creek, which followed the course of present-day Dorrance Street. To the north, the Great Salt Cove (filled at the end of the nineteenth century) separated the Weybosset Neck from the broad plains and rolling hills between the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers.

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In the seventeenth century, the Weybosset Side was common ground, an agricultural and pastoral adjunct to the more densely settled "Town" on the east side of the river. A bridge was built over the Providence River in 1660 to connect the Town with the hinterland and the Pequot Trail (which followed present-day Weybosset Street) but it was found structurally unsound and demolished; a permanent link across the river was not effected until 1711.

Land on the Weybosset Side was gradually parcelled out to individuals in the early part of the eighteenth century, and settlement was attempted. Settlement here was limited until Weybosset Hill was levelled beginning in 1724.

A new impetus was given to settlement on the Weybosset Side when the Reverend Joseph Snow, Jr. led a group of dissidents out of the First Congregational Society during the Great Awakening and established the New Light Meeting House in 1746 on the site of the present Beneficent Congregational Church. Daniel Abbott, impressed with the "true New England meeting-house" quality of the venture, donated the land immediately east of the structure in 1746 as a village common, now Abbott Park.

Joseph Snow, Jr. provided not only spiritual leadership, but also the motivating force behind the development of the Weybosset Side in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1749, Snow launched a major real estate venture by forming a corporation to purchase the Mathewson farm (bounded today by Westminster and Weybosset Streets from Clemence Street to Cathedral Square.) In 1751, Snow induced the new owners of this land to donate portions of it for a new street from Weybosset Bridge to Cathedral Square: by 1753 Westminster Street was constructed as far west as Dorrance Street, and reached Cathedral Square by the later 1760s. This eighteenth-century community was thus chiefly responsible for the current street system and a residential neighborhood, well-established on the West Side by 1800.

Despite some commercial and industrial development on the Weybosset Side in the eighteenth century and the construction of Long Wharf (present-day Custom House Street) in 1792, the original settlement east of the Providence River remained the center of such activity until the early nineteenth century. But bounded by the Providence River on the west and a steep hill on the east, this area was limited in its potential for growth. This physical restraint was emphasized by a huge conflagration on 21 January 1801 which destroyed a total of thirty-seven structures along South Main Street. Consequently, several commercial institutions moved across the river to less crowded land.

The first major commercial enterprise to move across the river,

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Exchange Bank, established new quarters at the corner of Exchange and Westminster Streets at the heart of what would become the financial center of Providence. Exchange Bank was followed in 1802 by the Washington Insurance Company¹ at the corner of Washington Row and Westminster Street and in 1814 by the Union Bank, which erected its offices at the corner of Westminster and Dyer Streets.² The movement of the Post Office in 1802 from the Market House to the Whitman Block further signalled the growing importance of today's Turk's Head area as a commercial center.³

This commercial growth at Weybosset Neck decreased the isolation of the residential area farther west. Its adjacency to the new commercial district made it appealing as a place to live and in the years after 1800 it became a fashionable area with high-style dwellings, such as the elaborate Benjamin Hoppin House on Westminster Street (1816, John Holden Greene, architect; demolished 1875). Only three early nineteenth-century dwellings, all dating from the 1820s, remain downtown: The Stephen Waterman House at 181 Weybosset Street (1823, John Holden Greene, architect), now altered almost beyond recognition; the Benjamin Dyer Block (ca 1820, John Holden Greene, architect) at Weybosset and Mathewson Streets, probably the earliest row house built in nineteenth-century Providence; and the Arnold-Palmer House at Chestnut and Pine Streets (1826, John Holden Greene, architect), moved to this site and restored in the 1960s.

The growth of the Weybosset Side residential neighborhood changed the religious composition of the New Light village. The original congregation continued to flourish and erected a new meetinghouse on the site of the 1746 structure in 1808; Beneficent Congregational Church was remodelled into its present Greek Revival form by James Bucklin in 1836, and its gold dome continues to dominate upper Weybosset Street.⁴ In addition, Baptists and other Congregationalists erected churches (long since demolished) on Pine Street in 1807. Another group of Congregationalists erected Westminster Congregational Church on Mathewson Street in 1829; now heavily altered,

¹The Washington Insurance Company merged with the Providence Insurance Company in 1812 to form the Providence Washington Insurance Company.

²The brick Union Bank Building, much deteriorated, was demolished in 1971.

³Turk's Head took its name from the ship's figure head resembling a Turk that was displayed in the balustrade over the piazza of Jacob Whitman's house (ca 1750) which stood at the intersection of Westminster and Weybosset Streets. The eponymous sculpture was destroyed in 1815, but the place-name remained; the Turk's Head Building erected on this site in 1913 features the turk's effigy in the stringcourse above the second story to reunite the place-name with its source.

⁴This building is now listed on the National Register.

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the building retains only a small fraction of its original fabric. Episcopalians commissioned Richard Upjohn to design Grace Church (now entered on the National Register), still standing at the corner of Westminster and Matherwon Streets, in 1845; the first American church with corner tower and spire, it presages the innumerable asymmetrical Gothic churches built in the late nineteenth century. In 1847, the Second Universalist Church, designed by Providence's premier mid-nineteenth-century architect, Thomas A. Tefft, was constructed at the corner of Weybosset and Eddy Streets; now heavily altered on the first story, the building still stands with its upper-story articulation and corbel cornice intact. The growing Roman Catholic community erected its first church, SS. Peter and Paul, at the western intersection of Westminster and Weybosset Streets in 1838; Mathewson Street Methodist Church followed in 1851. Both buildings were later demolished for the present structures on the original sites.

While upper Weybosset and Westminster Streets continued at least partially as residential neighborhoods through the nineteenth century, the increasing complexity and scale of Rhode Island's economy demanded a centrally located area devoted specifically to the distribution of goods and money. Geographic barriers to the east necessitated westward expansion of the commercial area centered around Market Square and Turk's Head.

Before 1800, Rhode Island's economy centered on mercantile activity largely supported by shipping trade with Europe, Africa, the Far East, and other coastal American cities. Industry was limited to the small-scale processing of agricultural products, shipbuilding, and distilling. But the early years of the nineteenth century held events which necessitated a shift in Providence's economic base. Shipping was hindered by the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, crippled by the Embargo of 1807, and dealt a death blow by the War of 1812. The future of continued economic growth lay in industrial development and, consequently, textile manufacturing, which had been slowly expanding since the introduction in 1790 of water-powered cotton spinning at Samuel Slater's mill in Pawtucket, received new attention after 1812. Rapid industrialization, the key to Rhode Island's economy in the early nineteenth century, required a more sophisticated and specialized marketplace for the exchange of goods, services, money, and credit. Beginning in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the downtown area began to develop a specialized land use to handle the increasingly complex commercial activity.

The area around the Turk's Head became firmly established as the city's commercial and financial center by the 1820s. In 1824, the Whitman House at Turk's Head was demolished to make way for the brick three-story Whitman Block, perhaps the earliest of the commercial blocks on the Weybosset Side. The Hamilton Block, at the northeast corner of Westminster and Exchange Streets, was constructed the next year. The most important

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new commercial building of the period, the Arcade, was erected just west of Turk's Head by Cyrus Butler and the Arcade Realty Company in 1828. The monumental Greek Revival structure, designed by James Bucklin and Russell Warren, housed a revolutionary marketing concept incorporating a number of small shops on three levels along a skylighted passage linking Westminster and Weybosset Streets.⁵

Highway construction in the 1820s further facilitated the growth of the area. Waterfront roads circumscribed the Turk's Head area: Cove Street extended along the southern side of the Cove following what is now the southern roadway of Kennedy Plaza; Dyer Street extended south along the Providence River from Westminster Street; and a bridge was constructed to connect Cove Street and Westminster Street at the western edge of the Providence River, along present-day Washington Row. A series of cross streets was constructed from Weybosset Street to the wharf area at present-day Dyer Street: Hay, Peck, and Orange Streets.

Major thoroughfares converging on the downtown facilitated the growth of the area as a regional center. Roads to outlying areas were established, and aboriginal roads improved, beginning late in the seventeenth century; most of these provided easy access to Providence's commercial center. A second link in the transportation network was created with the completion of the Blackstone Canal, which linked Worcester, Massachusetts with Providence, terminating at Market Square. The swift industrial and commercial development in the early nineteenth century had created a need for a transportation network, but the utility of the canal ended in the 1840s with the coming of the railroad.

While the highways and canal which converged on downtown reinforced its role as a transportation and commercial center, the railroad further provided a direct link between Downtown Providence and other major East Coast cities. Rail service in Providence commenced in 1835, but because of geographical barriers and lack of coordination between the independent railroad companies, through service was not immediately possible, and trains from the south stopped at the west side of the Providence Harbor, whence passengers were ferried to a terminal across the Harbor at India Point to meet trains going north. The need for continuous rail lines through Providence brought about the first major physical transformation of the downtown.

The Providence and Worcester Railroad Company, incorporated in 1844, petitioned the City Council in 1845 for permission to establish continuous

⁵The Arcade was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1976.

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tracks through Providence, with rail yards and passenger and freight terminals near the business district on the Weybosset Side. In January of 1846, the City Council approved plans for the partial filling of the Cove and, the construction of the elliptical Cove Basin, with highways and railroad tracks running along its southern edge and a promenade eighty feet wide surrounding the basin. Until this time, the Cove remained much as it was at the time of Roger Williams' purchase. Construction began the following year on the Union Station complex, which was located on the southern side of the Cove Basin, on the site of the present north roadway of Kennedy Plaza. The passenger depot, designed in the Lombard Romanesque style by Thomas A. Tefft, was supplemented by two freight depots to the east of the Cove Basin on Canal Street.⁶ The project, completed by 1848, gave definition for the first time to the northern border of downtown Providence by creating a major public square on the West Side, Exchange Place, which soon became a focus for civic activity as well as the center of Providence's transportation network.

Business and building activity thrived downtown during the prosperous years between the Panics of 1837 and 1857. Providence's lead as the economic center of Rhode Island, established after the Revolution, greatly increased during these years. Manufacturing became the mainstay of the state's economy, and its impact had two major effects on the downtown beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century: the large industrial enterprises located along the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers began to seek office space near the city's commercial center and many new banks and insurance companies were incorporated by the General Assembly to provide financial support for industrial expansion. To accommodate this growing economy, a number of handsome, substantial buildings and commercial blocks were constructed downtown.

The Turk's Head area continued to be the focus of major downtown building activity during the 1840s and 1850s. In 1843, the Providence Washington Insurance Company erected the Washington Buildings on Washington Row; this monumental three-story structure designed by James Bucklin in the Greek Revival style consisted of a central pilastered-and-pedimented granite pavilion flanked by balustraded brick wings.⁷ Bucklin was also responsible for the 1845 Exchange Bank Building, a three-story vernacular Greek Revival structure that still stands at the corner of Exchange Street and Kennedy Plaza.⁸ The mid-1850s saw the addition of three extremely

⁶The last remaining structure of this first station complex, the northernmost freight station on Canal Street, was demolished in 1980.

⁷The Washington Buildings were demolished in 1916 for the construction of the present Hospital Trust Bank Building.

⁸A fourth story was added in the twentieth century.

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important buildings in the Turk's Head vicinity, all built in the Italianate style. The four-story Bank of North America Building at 48 Weybosset Street, one of the last buildings designed by Thomas A. Tefft, and the Merchant's Bank Building at 20 Westminster Street (Alpheus C. Morse and Clifton A. Hall, architects) represent the growth of banking during these years. The Federal Building (known as the Custom House, Ammi B. Young, architect), at 24 Weybosset Street consolidated the various United States Government agencies in one location; at the corner of Weybosset and Custom House (then known as Long Wharf) Streets, the building was close both to the core of the central business district and to shipping activity along the Providence Harbor. (All three buildings are entered on the National Register.)

It was during these years that the central business district became an area of specialized land uses. While the area around Turk's Head was gaining importance as the city's financial center, an entertainment district began to grow on Westminster Street. In 1847, Howard Hall, the first of four structures on its site, was constructed from designs by Thomas Tefft at the northeast corner of Dorrance and Weybosset Streets; this structure accommodated public presentations by celebrities as diverse as Jenny Lind, Sam Houston, Tom Thumb, and Edgar Allen Poe. Howard Hall, rebuilt in 1856 after a major fire in 1853, was augmented in 1854 by the adjacent Forbes Theatre, which, like the first two Howard Buildings, met a fiery end shortly after its construction.⁹

Events after mid-century reinforced the burgeoning industrial economy and contributed to the intensification of commercial development in Downtown Providence. With the development of steam power for industrial use, manufacturing was no longer restricted to locations near swiftly flowing rivers for water power, and geographical dispersion of industrial expansion became practicable, precipitating a period of rapid economic growth in the second half of the century. The Civil War further spurred Rhode Island's industrial growth: Burnside Rifle Works, Providence Tool Company, and Builders Iron Foundry produced weapons for Union troops; Providence woolen mills expanded production to provide uniforms; and the textile industry decisively captured the growing domestic market from foreign competition because of the blockade of Southern ports and the consequent cessation of cloth making in England. The initiation of horse-drawn streetcar service in 1864 and its subsequent expansion began to knit the

⁹The Forbes Theater was replaced in 1860 by the appropriately named Phenix Building, which in turn was replaced by the Howard Building complex in the late 1950s.

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various neighborhoods of Providence into an urban whole: streetcar lines radiated in all directions along major streets from downtown, thereby reinforcing its role as a transportation center established by Union Station.

The years following the Civil War saw vigorous growth in the downtown. New construction in the area around the Turk's Head further reinforced its commercial importance: the forms of these new structures moved quickly to the elaborate exuberance of High Victorian Gothic exemplified by the cast-iron-front Equitable Building at 38 Weybosset (1874), the Wilcox Building at 42 Weybosset (1875), and Hall's Building at 45-53 Weybosset (1876). The largest private structure downtown at that time was the six-story, Second Empire-style Butler Exchange Building erected in 1873 between Westminster Street and Exchange Place just north of the Arcade. Butler Exchange provided a large amount of office space consolidated in one location at the middle of the financial district as well as a shopping arcade on ground level which, in concert with that of the Arcade, provided a thoroughfare between Exchange Place and Weybosset Street.¹⁰

While the Turk's Head remained the City's financial center, commercial and retail activities which had previously been located east of Dorrance Street began a steady movement westward, occupying and eventually replacing the residential structures that had been erected in that area during the first half of the nineteenth century. This movement signalled a further diversification of commercialization and specialization of land use within the central business district. The earliest major commercial structures, just west of Dorrance Street, include the High Victorian Gothic Dorrance and Gaspee Buildings of 1876 at 180 and 206 Westminster Street, the Second Empire Burgess Building of 1870 at 230 Westminster Street--all three buildings designed by George Waterman Cady--and the Second Empire Earle Building from the early 1870s at 56-70 Washington Street. A group of smaller commercial buildings were erected in the early 1870s on the north side of Westminster Street between Mathewson and Moulton Streets; while these have been quite heavily altered in recent years, the building at 303-305 Westminster Street retains its cast-iron front on the upper stories. Commercial growth was slower on upper Weybosset Street, but both the handsome Italianate Bush Company Building of 1873 at 214 Weybosset and the Gothicizing Richmond Building of 1876 at 270 Weybosset Street were among the first Victorian commercial structures in that old residential neighborhood.

¹⁰ Butler Exchange was demolished in 1925 for the construction of the Industrial National Bank Building.

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A number of important educational institutions were established downtown during the middle years of the nineteenth century. The State Normal School, forerunner of today's Rhode Island College, occupied the Second Universalist Church on Weybosset Street beginning in 1852. Mowry and Goff's English and Classical School for Boys opened in the Lyceum Building (1858) at 100 Westminster Street in 1864 and later built its own structure on Snow Street.¹¹ The Providence Public Library, founded in 1875, occupied several buildings downtown--including Butler Exchange and the English and Classical School Building--before erecting permanent quarters at Washington and Greene Streets.

The election of Thomas A. Doyle as Mayor of Providence (1864-1869, 1870-1881, 1884-1886) marked the beginning of a twenty-year period of administrative continuity for the City: one of the earliest proponents of urban renewal, Doyle reorganized city bureaus and played a major role in the reorganization of the City's transportation system. Further, he laid the groundwork for the filling of the Cove Basin and the construction of a new Union Station. The bronze statue of Mayor Doyle, commissioned by the City and installed at Cathedral Square in 1889, honors the man who guided the City through two decades of steady growth; it was moved to the corner of Broad and Weybosset Streets during the 1960s.

Mayor Doyle's major civic project of the 1870s, the construction of City Hall, not only provided much-needed office space for the growing City government, but also gave monumental definition to the west end of Exchange Plaza. Designed in the Second Empire style by Samuel J.F. Thayer, the building was erected between 1874 and 1878 on a lot acquired for the construction of a City Hall in 1851.

Continuing economic growth in the last two decades of the nineteenth century supported building activity which gave the downtown much of its present form. Many of the buildings and institutions that continue to dominate the downtown date from this period, and the area's present topographical form was conceived and executed at this time.

The Turk's Head area acquired four new structures during the 1880s and 1890s. In 1886, Stone, Carpenter and Willson designed a new structure for the Exchange Bank to replace the southern half of the earlier building on Exchange Street between Westminster Street and Exchange Place: Its eclectic design moves beyond its basic Queen Anne format to an exuberance captured in the highly plastic brick and stone walls and lavish use of ornamentation. The Banigan Building at 10 Weybosset signals a change from the complex and picturesque late Victorian compositions to more academic

¹¹Both buildings have since been demolished.

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styles based on classical and Renaissance prototypes: this ten-story steel-frame structure, designed in the Renaissance Revival by Winslow and Bigelow, was Providence's first "skyscraper." The Francis and Lauderdale Buildings, designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson and erected on adjacent lots on Westminster Street in 1894, are fine examples of the re-emerging classicism in commercial buildings that proliferated in Providence between 1890 and 1920.

By the 1880s, the area west of Dorrance Street was well established as a retail center for downtown. These stores represented a new distinction between wholesale and retail trade, a change in the distribution mode which is largely a product of nineteenth-century specialization of merchandising. The department store, of which Providence had three by 1900, in particular represents an economy of scale and mass marketing that was both made possible by and necessary for the increasingly complex economy. The first Callendar, McAuslan and Troop's "Boston Store," opened in the early 1870s at the corner of Westminster and Union Streets. The success of Providence's first department store led not only to its expansion by 1892 to most of the block of Westminster between Eddy and Union Streets, but also to the organization of competing firms. The Shepard Company was founded in 1880 in a small building on Westminster Street between Union and Clemence Streets. Shepard's soon achieved great popularity with the buying public, and expanded by building and acquisition to occupy the whole block bounded by Westminster, Clemence, Washington, and Union Streets. Both the Shepard's and the Boston Store buildings rely on a mixture of Romanesque and Classical motifs juxtaposed within the context of the emerging Commercial Style, which form would continue to be re-interpreted for downtown retail and commercial buildings until the First World War.

The success of Shepard's and the Boston Store helped secure Providence's role as a regional commercial center and no doubt encouraged other retail enterprises to move to middle Westminster Street and to nearby Weybosset Street.

Gladdings, the well-established women's wear firm, moved into the Burrill Building at 291 Westminster Street (Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects) upon its completion in 1891. One of the most handsome late nineteenth-century buildings in Providence, the Burrill Building partakes of much of the same aesthetic as contemporary buildings by Louis Sullivan: its "base-shaft-capital" vertical arrangement, typical of the emerging format for tall buildings, is articulated to express its steel-frame construction.

The Tilden-Thurber Building, directly across Westminster Street

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from the Burrill Building, is far more exuberant. Designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge and completed in 1895, the four-story building relies more heavily on classical and Renaissance motifs, assembled in a highly original way, for the elaboration of its wall surface. Like the Burrill Building, it is unaltered.

A third competitor in the department-store field opened on Weybosset Street in the Hodges Building in 1891. Like the Boston Store and Shepard's, the Outlet Company rapidly expanded to occupy an entire city block, and absorbed the Hodges Building in its expansion. Like Shepard's, the Outlet Company was a "full service" department store, stocking furniture, housewares, clothing, books, cosmetics, and comestibles. The two stores remained in one-to-one competition until the demise of Shepard's in 1974: this competition resulted not only in commercial vigor for Providence retailing, but also, as the two stores moved into other spheres of activity, in the growth of communications when both stores began to operate radio stations in the early 1920s.

The growth of the retail shopping area was not limited to single-store buildings. A number of large buildings containing smaller retail enterprises and services were constructed in the area west of Dorrance Street during the two decades before 1900, perpetuating an older pattern for the conduct of commerce. Undoubtedly, the most elaborate of these is the Conrad Building of 1885 at 371-391 Westminster Street, designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson: drawing on a wide range of historical styles, it represents the pinnacle of Victorian eclecticism in Providence. The Lederer Building of 1897 at 139 Mathewson Street combines the rudimentary format of Commercial Style Buildings with more elaborate Beaux-Arts detailing. The seven-story Alice Building of 1898 (Martin and Hall, architects) at 236 Westminster remains within the tradition of Second Renaissance Revival style buildings, and is further distinguished by arcades of small shops on each of the upper floors.

The commercialization of Westminster Street and its adjacent side streets was largely influential on the form of the Mathewson Street Church building of 1895, built to replace the previous building of 1851. This Beaux-Art Commercial Style building was designed by Cutting, Carleton and Cutting to blend harmoniously with nearby commercial buildings, and its facade belies its ecclesiastical functions.

The railroad facilities built in 1848 had begun to prove insufficient by the early 1870s, and in 1873 the first of several commissions to study the reorganization of the land around the Cove Basin and the rail line was established. The study spanned the next two decades, and was the

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subject of heated debates, proposals, majority and minority commission reports.¹² The project which was finally undertaken in 1892 gave the area north of Exchange Place its final form (see map), and has proved of major significance to Providence's architecture, city planning, and transportation.

The collaborative project between the City of Providence and the railroads¹³ provided for construction of retaining walls for the Woonasquaket and Moshassuck Rivers, filling the Cove Basin, moving of the station and railroad tracks approximately five hundred feet north, and construction of a new Union Station complex.

This project called for the demolition of Thomas Tefft's handsome Lombard Romanesque station of 1848--and it was, in fact, partially destroyed by fire in 1896, just as work on the new complex began--and the commission for the design of the new complex was given to Stone, Carpenter and Willson, Providence's most prominent late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural firm. Their five-building complex (1898), a well integrated design dependent upon classically inspired motifs, spreads 870 feet across an artificial knoll overlooking Exchange Place and City Hall Park; the complex is both well sited and well integrated architecturally with other structures around this large open space.

The placement of the railroad tracks above underpassing roads and rivers raised engineering problems. The viaduct which carries the tracks just north of the station is a combination structure utilizing post-and-lintel and truss construction supporting a pan, a configuration which allows for placement of tracks regardless of the position of the substructure and for the use of passenger subways.

Landscaping of the open spaces of Exchange Place and City Hall Park was a master stroke of city planning. This area provides a much-needed open space in a densely built urban area and a handsome introduction to

¹²Cady, pgs. 163-165, 179-180.

¹³"A merger was effected by the leasing of the Providence and Worcester Railroad to the Boston and Providence which, in turn was consolidated in 1888 with the Old Colony Railroad... The Old Colony, in 1889, united with the New York, Providence and Boston and the Providence and Springfield railroads in submitting to the City Council a modified plan for the terminal improvements..." Cady, p. 165.

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the downtown for travelers arriving at Union Station and from the East Side. Originally, only a block of large buildings on the south side of the area and the City Hall provided sufficiently monumental definition for this new open space, but new construction in the early years of the twentieth century filled the perimeters of the area with buildings of appropriate scale.

While the last two decades of the nineteenth century gave final definition to the present form of the downtown fabric, the first three decades of the twentieth century represented the culmination of the vigorous growth of the central business district that began in the first half of the previous century. Industrial activity continued apace as the primary support of Rhode Island's flourishing economy, and the prosperity of these years gave rise to the reinforcement of Providence as a major metropolitan transportation center, the growth of concomitant services such as hotels and theatres, and the increased construction of office and commercial space in the downtown.

The completion of the new Union Station complex in 1898 had provided Providence with better, more extensive service. Railroad service was further improved in 1909 with the completion of the East Side tunnel, which linked the main railroad artery with suburban lines to East Providence, Warren, Bristol, and Newport and thus solidified Providence's position as a major regional center.¹⁴ Extended streetcar lines also linked outlying suburbs with downtown Providence; these lines, like the intracity lines, emanated from a central point in Exchange Place.

The Providence Harbor also received a great deal of attention in the early years of the twentieth century, and expanded its activities with greater international trade in goods required by a maturing industrial economy. The harbor itself was widened and deepened to accommodate increased traffic.

Of more immediate impact on the downtown were the many new hotels and theatres that sprang up to serve the growing native and transient populations. While theatres, auditoriums, and hotels had existed in Providence since the eighteenth century, their formal development and their impact upon the urban environment took on a greater significance in the early twentieth century.

¹⁴This link was severed in 1981 as a first step in the capital center project; see below.

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The advent of the motion picture in the early years of the twentieth century necessitated the construction of new theatres. The earliest motion picture theatres were generally created out of existing buildings, such as the Nickel Theatre and Keith's, both on Westminster Street.¹⁵ By the second decade of the twentieth century, however, several new motion picture theatres were constructed in downtown Providence in the vicinity of Washington Street. The Union Theatre on Mathewson Street (now demolished), the Strand at 85 Washington Street (1916, Thomas J. Hill Pierce, architect), Schubert's Majestic at 195 Washington Street (1917, William R. Walker and Son, architects), and the Rialto at 119 Mathewson Street (formerly the Westminster Congregational Church, 1829, James Bucklin, architect; extensively remodelled as to become a new building) formed the core of Providence's new theatre district. These new buildings were designed in the Beaux-Arts style, and presage the culmination of this genre in the 1920s. The full-blown movie palace is well represented in Providence by Loew's State Theatre at 200 Weybosset (1928, C.W. and George Rapp, architects); a handsome co-mingling of Italian and Spanish Baroque motifs, this extremely elaborate building is the finest expression of its type in New England.¹⁶

Hotels, like theatres, had existed in downtown Providence throughout the nineteenth century, and, like theatres, they became transformed into a grander expression of the American Spirit in architecture during the early years of the twentieth century. The earliest hotel in downtown Providence was the City Hotel, erected on Weybosset Street in 1832. It remained in this location until it was demolished in the 1890s to make room for expansion of the Outlet Company. The first major hotel in Providence was the 250-room Narragansett built in 1878 at the corner of Weybosset and Dorrance Streets (Walker and Gould, architects). It was joined in 1880 by the smaller Hotel Dorrance, at the corner of Westminster and Dorrance Streets (Stone and Carpenter, architects).¹⁷ Around 1890,

¹⁵ The Nickel Theatre was demolished for construction of the Albee Theatre in 1919; it, in turn was demolished in 1971. Keith's Theatre was razed in 1949 for the construction of Grant's Department Store.

¹⁶ Completely restored in 1976, the theatre is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places

¹⁷ Both buildings have been demolished. Broadcast House (122 Weybosset Street) occupies the site of the Narragansett Hotel. The Hotel Dorrance was replaced by the Woolworth Building of 1922.

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the modest Hotel Dreyfus was built at 119 Washington Street; it was thoroughly remodeled in 1917. Around 1900, two more hotels were added downtown: the Abbott Park Hotel at 269 Weybosset and the Crown Hotel at 200 Weybosset Street (formerly the Providence Athletic Association, remodeled by Stone, Carpenter and Willson in 1901).¹⁸ The small but elegant Blackstone Hotel of 1911 at 317 Westminster Street (Clark, Howe and Homer, architects) did little to increase the city's stock of modern hotel accommodations, and by 1915 the Chamber of Commerce began to discuss sponsoring a major modern hotel for downtown Providence. The culmination of Chamber of Commerce activities was the Biltmore Hotel (Warren and Wetmore, architects) completed in 1922 at the corner of Dorrance and Washington Streets, overlooking City Hall Park and Exchange Place.¹⁹ Since its completion, the Biltmore has been the focus of social and business activity in downtown Providence. The Biltmore Hotel was not only Providence answer to the hotel-building trend of the early twentieth century, but also a fine addition to the growing number of large buildings defining the space of Exchange Place and City Hall Park.

The perimeter of Exchange Place and City Hall Park was the site of much of the building activity in downtown Providence during the early twentieth century. The Federal Building of 1908 (Clark and Howe, architects) not only relieved the pressure on the Federal Building of 1857, but also--and more important for urban design--provided a handsome building on the east end of Exchange Place similar in scale to the City Hall at the west end. The space between the two buildings was formalized between 1908 and 1914 by the creation of a landscaped mall, the statue of General Burnside (1887) was moved from in front of the Federal Building to City Hall Park, and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument (1871) was moved from in front of City Hall to the middle of the mall. A handsome metal-and-glass streetcar waiting room (Martin and Hall, architects) was erected at the western end of the Mall in 1913-1914. In 1928, the Industrial National Bank completed its new headquarters on the south side of Exchange Place, on the site of the Butler Exchange. The emphatic verticality of this twenty-six-story Art Deco skyscraper, designed by Walker and Gillette,

¹⁸ All three buildings are still standing, though only the Abbott Park continues to function as a hotel. Both the Dreyfus and Crown Hotels have been acquired by Johnson and Wales Business School for dormitory and classroom space.

¹⁹ Now listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Biltmore Hotel underwent a major renovation scheme after its closing in 1975. Upon reopening in 1979, it returned as a focal point in downtown activity.

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is well counterbalanced by the open spaces of Exchange Place and City Hall Park. The height of the Industrial Bank Building and the Biltmore Hotel works in juxtaposition with the lower buildings around the open space to create a remarkable handsome spatial entity.

The area around the Turk's Head was also the site of significant building activity. The most flamboyant example of Beaux-Arts commercial architecture in Providence was erected in 1901 at the corner of Dorrance and Westminster Streets: Stone, Carpenter and Willson's Union Trust Bank Building is a twelve-story, brick-sheathed structure with elaborate stone trim. The Whitman Block of 1825 was razed, and in its place rose the Howells and Stokes-designed Turk's Head Building of 1913. The seventeen-story, flatiron-shaped building is a fine example of the Beaux-Arts style which tended to prevail in Providence's office buildings during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Also Beaux-Arts in style is the Hospital Trust Bank Building, designed by York and Sawyer, which replaced the Washington Buildings at the corner of Washington Row and Westminster Street in 1919.

A number of new office buildings were constructed in the area west of Dorrance Street. The most important of these large buildings, designed in the imposing Beaux-Arts style, include the Caesar Misch Building of 1903 at the corner of Westminster and Empire Streets, similar in its elaborate detailing to the Union Trust Building; the Lapham Building of 1904 at 290 Westminster Street; and the Providence Journal Company building²⁰ of 1906 (Peabody and Stearns, architects) at 209 Westminster Street. Many smaller, well designed office buildings were also constructed downtown during the early years of the twentieth century, including 55 Eddy Street (ca 1908), with its highly plastic bay-window facade and ornamental fire escapes; the Smith Building at 57 Eddy Street, 1912 (Martin and Hall, architects), which demonstrates stylistic allegiance to the Commercial Style; and the Woolworth Building²¹ of 1922 at 187 Westminster Street in the Commercial Style. The Summerfield Building of 1914 at 274 Weybosset Street (Albert Harkness, architect) is unique in Providence: its design shows an assimilation and proficient use of the Commercial Style, rather than its relegation to a vernacular interpretation or its abandonment for

²⁰The Journal Building was converted to commercial uses when the Providence Journal Company moved to new quarters in the 1930s and altered in the 1950s. Restoration of the building commenced in 1983.

²¹The Woolworth Building replaced the Hotel Dorrance of 1880, obviated, no doubt, by the opening of the Biltmore Hotel in 1922.

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the Beaux-Arts in such a high-style building.

Only a few buildings in downtown Providence departed stylistically from two prevalent forms--i.e., the classically derived forms such as the Beaux-Arts or the Colonial Revival and the Commercial Style--or a mixture of the two. The impact of the Art Deco movement of the 1920s was limited to the Industrial National Bank Building, a very conservative example, the Kresge Building of 1927 at 191 Westminster, and the small commercial building at 343 Westminster, built ca 1928.

In spite of the continued building activity in Providence during the 1920s, Rhode Island's long years of growth were reaching an end. The textile industry never fully recovered from a slump after World War I, and worsening labor relations began to erode the state's industrial base, and a number of mills left the state, often to southern states, nearer the source of raw materials, which could provide a cheaper labor market. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression produced long-term crippling effects to Rhode Island's economy. Providence not only suffered its own local difficulties, but as the financial and commercial focus of a wide region it bore the subsidiary effects of the Depression in the rest of the state as well. This decline in industry, trade, borrowing, mortgaging, insurance, travel, and commerce was by far the major economic calamity of Providence's history.

The Great Depression virtually halted new development in Downtown Providence, and between the crash and the end of World War II, only two major building projects were undertaken in the area. In 1934, the Providence Journal abandoned its Beaux-Arts quarters on Westminster Street for a Georgian Revival building on Fountain Street (Albert Kahn, architect). A Post Office annex was completed in 1940 just west of the 1908 Federal Building.

The post-war prosperity of the late 1940s was short-lived in Providence, Rhode Island, and the nation as a whole. Only two buildings of note were constructed: People's Bank at 70 Exchange Place, a simple, Style Modern building (Cram and Ferguson, architects) completed in 1948 and W.T. Grant's Department Store of 1949 at 260 Westminster Street (Leland and Larson, architects).

Although few new buildings were erected in the 1950s, the period is of crucial importance to the fabric of downtown Providence. Post-war concepts of urban renewal affected Providence in several ways--long-range planning, remodelling, and demolitions--which threatened the city's historic resources.

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The major planning activity of the 1950s was the production of a long-range set of guidelines for future development, Downtown Providence 1970. This ambitious proposal, which called for the virtual rebuilding of the central business district, represented an effort to preserve the economic vitality of the downtown and fulfill the city's self-image of progress and modernity. The boom year in Providence, however, had passed, and--fortunately for the architectural fabric of the area--the plans went unrealized. Implementation of these plans was limited to the renewal of the area between Empire Street and Interstate Highway 95, the construction of the Civic Center on Sabin Street, and the transformation of Westminster Street into a pedestrian walkway between Dorrance and Snow Streets.

Throughout the 1960s, older buildings west of Empire Street were demolished to be replaced with generally sterile new towers and office buildings. The best of these new structures is Paul Rudolph's Beneficent House of 1967 at Chestnut and Broad Streets, built as housing for the elderly, this lively Brutalist building of brick and structural concrete is a handsome addition to the renewal area.

The Civic Center, a large, hip-roof, polygonal building, is disjunctive with the central business district to its south: its large scale is better viewed from high speed on the nearby interstate highway, and, isolated by parking lots, it effectively turns its back on the rest of downtown Providence.

While a plan for the creation of a pedestrian walkway along Westminster Street had been suggested as early as 1907, the idea was never seriously considered. Discussion of the present Westminster Mall began in the late 1950s, and the project came to fruition only after a great deal of disagreement over its form. The Westminster Mall opened in 1965; landscaped with benches and planting pockets, it attempted to bring suburban-shopping-mall modernity to what was perceived as an outmoded shopping area. The project, however, met little success: it limited vehicular access to the city's major shopping street but offered no additional amenities to entice shoppers downtown. In spite of this urban renewal effort, public perception of downtown continued to decline, and the increasing unwillingness of patrons to battle downtown traffic, the lure of the suburban shopping malls, and the closing of several major downtown stores were both symptoms and causes of this decline.

This decline in Downtown Providence's retail activity has been accompanied by continued growth of the area as a financial center. Large office buildings have continued to rise east of Dorrance Street since the late 1950s. The new Howard Building (1959, enlarged 1968) was the first

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major office construction project Downtown since the 1920s. The tower at 40 Westminster Street (1969), the first major high-rise building, is a twenty-three-story reinforced-concrete structure. The Hospital Trust Tower (1974), at the corner of Westminster and Exchange Streets, is a thirty-story, steel-frame, glass-and-travertine curtain-wall structure. Fleet Center (1983-84), like the Hospital Trust Tower, is a glass-and-stone sheathed steel-frame building. These buildings have reinforced the importance of Downtown Providence as a major commercial center and provide several hundred thousand square feet of first-class office space.

The general decline of Downtown Providence as a retail center and the construction of new office buildings has left a number of fully and partially vacant older buildings. Some of these have deteriorated seriously, and most are generally neglected. In recent years, however, concern over the future of Downtown Providence has brought the area into focus as an area with great potential for rehabilitation.

Renewed interest in Downtown Providence has come from several sources. The Interface: Providence report of 1974 first brought attention to the potential of the area. This transportation study focused on the compactness of the downtown and presented a comprehensive proposal for the improvement of transportation facilities within the context of the existing buildings. The Providence Preservation Society's efforts, stimulated by the Interface study, have drawn further attention to the architectural and historical significance of the area. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission's published survey report Downtown Providence has been widely distributed. The growing awareness of the area's importance and potential combined with the tax benefits available for rehabilitation since 1976 have encouraged the renovation of several key buildings already listed in the National Register: the Arcade, the Biltmore, the Telephone Company, the Union Trust Company Building, the Banigan Building. Restoration of such key landmarks as the City Hall and Loew's State Theatre (now the Providence Center for the Performing Arts) has further emphasized the importance of the area as a whole.

The rich stock of buildings, the plans for renewal through the use of the current building stock, and the increasing desire of many property owners to rehabilitate and restore downtown buildings make nomination of the Downtown Providence Historic District necessary at this time.

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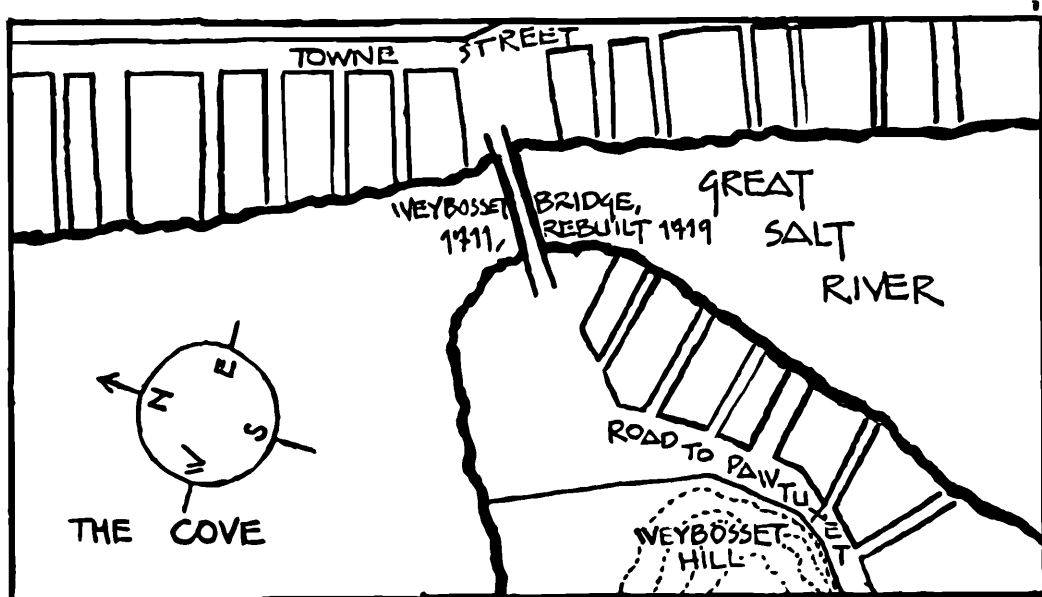
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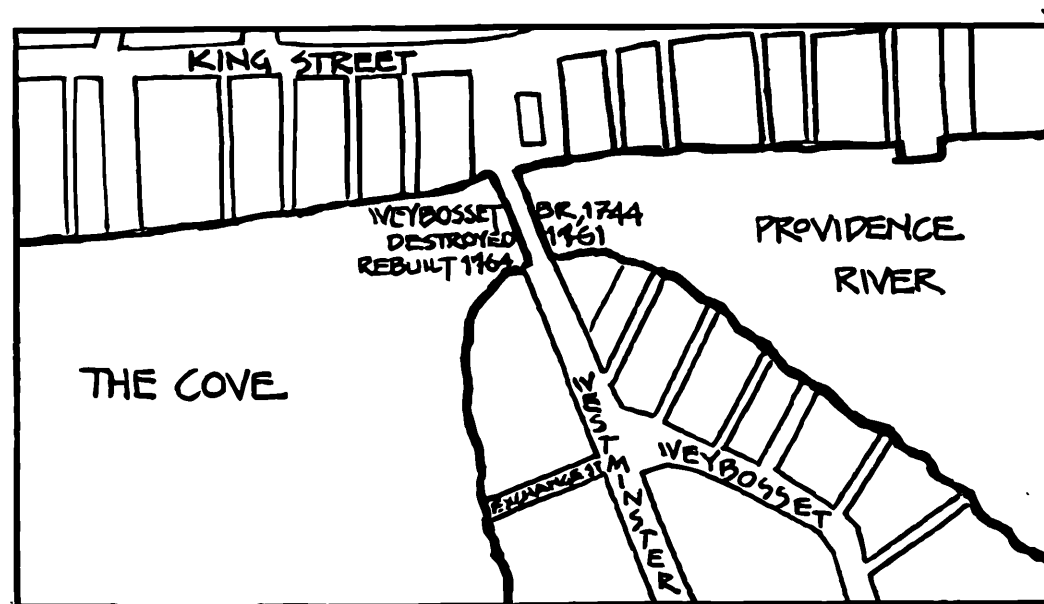
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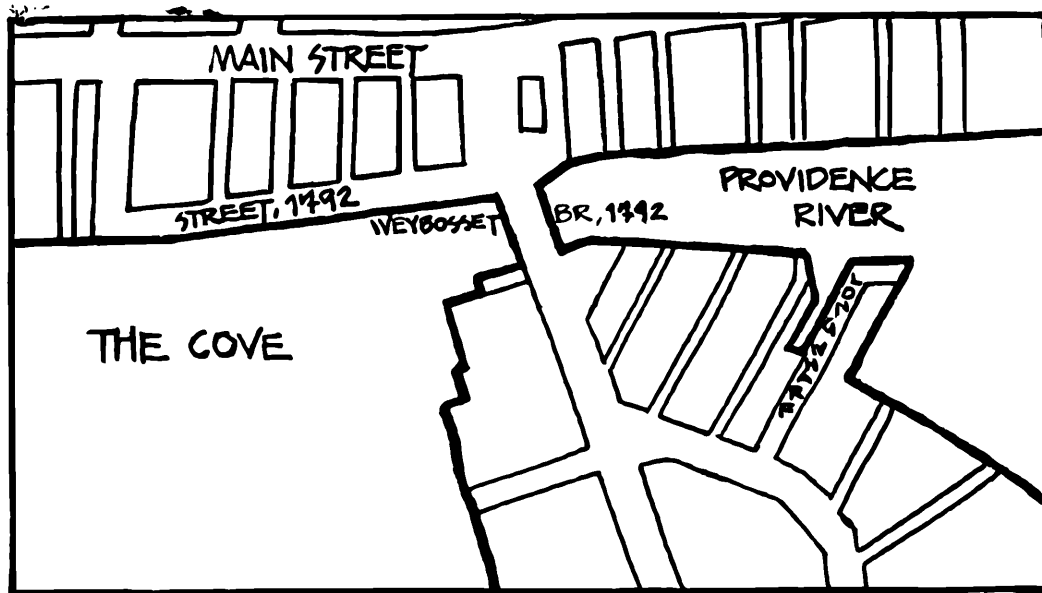
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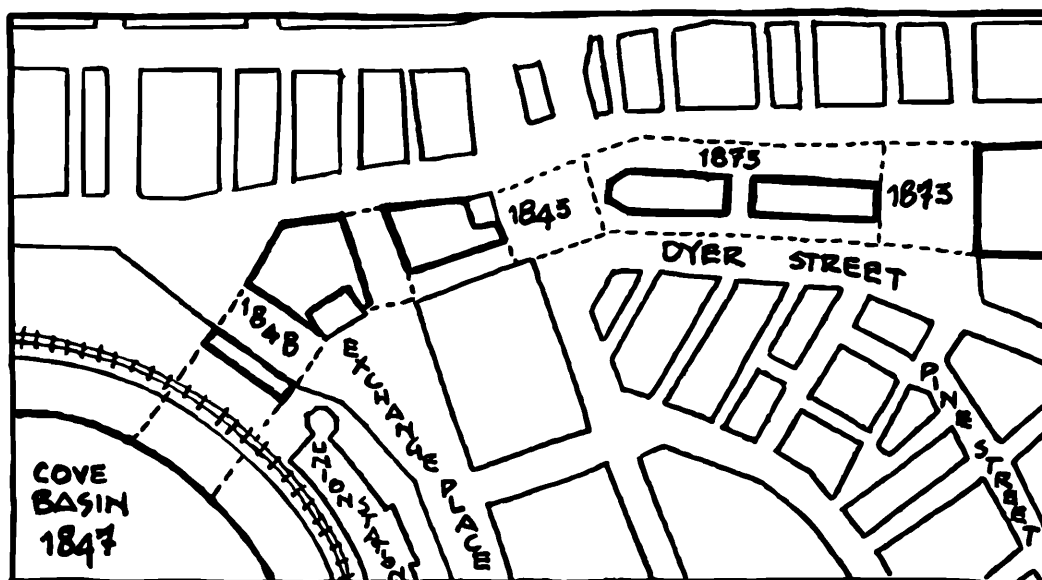
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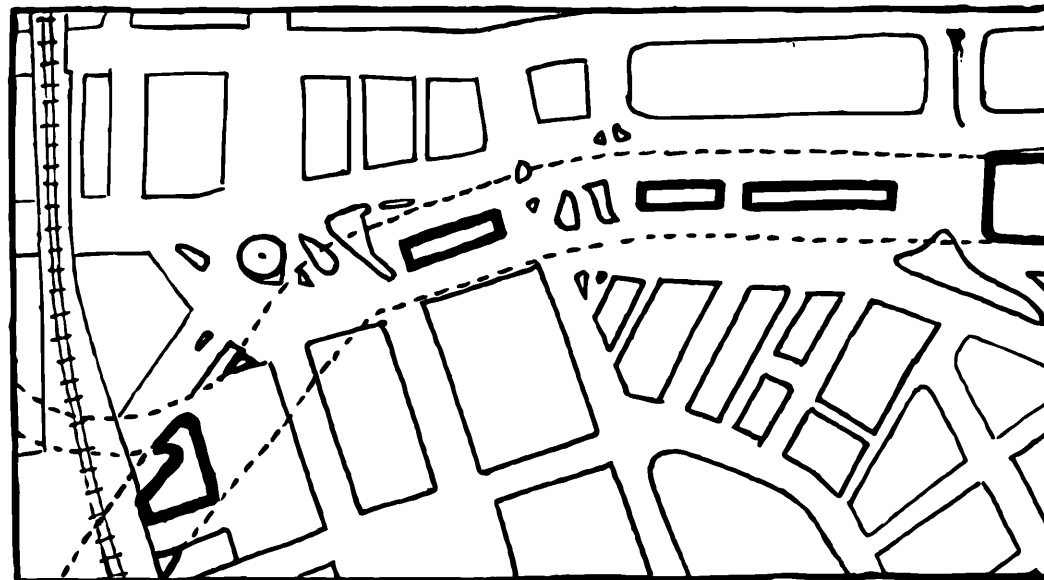
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FROM J.H. CADY, THE CIVIL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT
OF PROVIDENCE, P. 144.

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District, Providence, Rhode Island," and drawn at a scale of 160 feet to the inch. The district comprises the following individual parcels, identified by the City Tax Assessor's Plat and Lot numbers: Plat 19, Lots 7, 13, 33, 45 and 46; Plat 20, Lots 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 42, 44, 268, 364, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 73, 75, 78, 84, 87, 88, 89, 92, 93, 91, 96, 97, 41, 59, 118, 119, 120, 122, 137, 45, 47, 180, 62, 159, 188, 189, 191, 201, 202, 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 150, 130, 131, 132, 366, 184, 185, 186, 107, 48, 110, 192, 193, 281, 282, 284, 254, 300, 302, 320, 321, 323, 135, 136, 144, 146, 139, 140, 142, 143, 311, 149, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 164, 165, 166, 177, 178, 179, 167, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 176, 60, 63, 260, 280, 261, 329, 29, 116, 117, 138, 129, 147, 148, 160, 161, 162, 163, 158, 203; Plat 24, Lots 411, 415, 416, 405, 406, 409, 410, 417, 418, 419, 423, 424, 425, 426, 422, 430, 431, 432, 474, 477, 480, 481, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 47, 502, 503, 504, 607, 633; Plat 25, Lots 293, 305, 116, 196, 236, 185, 186, 179, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 174, 219, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 150, 152, 154, 155, 156, 145, 147, 148, 92, 363, 346, 347, 349, 350, 351, 353, 354, 342, 343, 344, 345, 372, 373, 197, 341, 348, 331, 332, 339, 340, 431, 432, 323, 325, 327, 328, 329, 330, 364, 377, 391, 142, 310, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 318, 319, 320, 322.

The boundaries of the Downtown Providence Historic District have been drawn to comprise the most significant concentration of Providence's central business district as it developed, largely between 1800 and 1940. These structures are associated with the development of this area as a specialized, centralized neighborhood for the exchange of goods and services. They include stores, office buildings, public buildings, transportation-related buildings, theatres, and churches, as well as the open spaces and sculpture typical of such entities.

The district itself is cohesive, and visual and historical disjunction exist beyond the district's edges as defined by the boundaries. To the north, the open space and parking lots create a visual void. On the west, new structures erected on land cleared by urban renewal are significantly different in scale, style, and use from most of the buildings within the district. At the south and southeast, the vacant land of a former jewelry-manufacturing area foils the concentrated district. The Providence River, historically the eastern edge of Downtown, forms the eastern border, with the College Hill Historic District beyond.

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The photographs which accompany this nomination pre-date actual submission of the nomination by several years. Nevertheless, the photographs substantially represent the buildings depicted at the time of nomination.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Downtown Providence," Statewide Historical Preservation Report,
P-P-5, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, May, 1981.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property c. 90 acres

Quadrangle name Providence

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the Downtown Providence Historic District is shown
as the dotted line on the accompanying map, "Downtown Providence Historic
(See Continuation Sheet #81)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| N.A. | | | |

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William McKenzie Woodward, Principal Historic Preservation Planner

organization R.I. Historical Preservation Comm. date 15 November 1983

street & number 150 Benefit Street

telephone 401-277-2678

city or town Providence

state Rhode Island 02903

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

William McKenzie Woodward

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 16 Dec 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

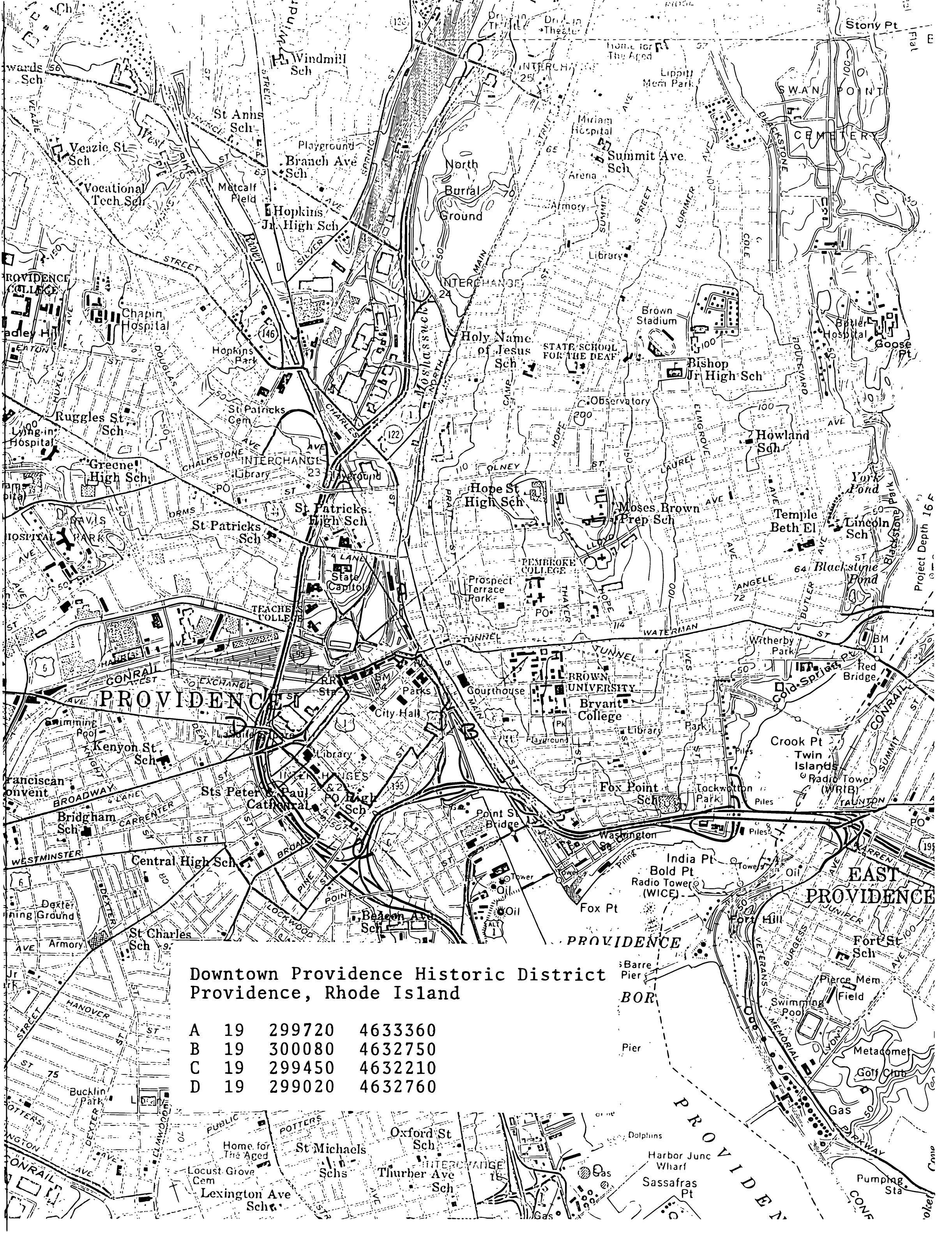
date 2/10/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Downtown Providence Historic District
Providence, Rhode Island

| | | | |
|---|----|--------|---------|
| A | 19 | 299720 | 4633360 |
| B | 19 | 300080 | 4632750 |
| C | 19 | 299450 | 4632210 |
| D | 19 | 299020 | 4632760 |